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ABSTRACT

In this report, community education training in Scotland was reviewed to identify ways of improving the education and training provided to current and future community educators. Data were gathered from 16 separate sources, including users of community education, community education experts, employers, recent graduates from training, training providers, and key stakeholders representing an array of national organizations. Data collection methods included document analysis, group discussions, interviews, questionnaires, and solicitation of comments over the Internet. The following options for training community educators were identified: (1) retaining current training structures but working to improve them in various ways; (2) moving toward a "sandwich" model of training; and (3) moving toward work-based training as the main route to a professional qualification for community education. The following were among the 12 recommendations offered: (1) increase the role of learning from experience in the development of community education professionals; (2) devise an entitlement to continuing professional development for all community education staff; and (3) develop schemes for accrediting previous learning and experience. The following items are appended: lists of responding local authorities and departments and other responding organizations; an overview of the experts group method; and the training course curricula. (Contains 11 tables and 109 references.) (MN)

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The Scottish Council for Research in Education

Working for Democracy

Review of Community Education Training

Heather Malcolm
Valerie Wilson
Sheila Hamilton

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Working for Democracy

Review of Community Education Training

Heather Malcolm
Valerie Wilson
Sheila Hamilton

The Scottish Council for
Research in Education

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Executive Summary

Background and Aims

In spring 2000 the Scottish Executive Education Department commissioned SCRE to provide consultancy to a Review of Community Education Training, asking SCRE to (1) draw up a map of the main tasks in community education work, identifying the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for them (2) identify the main components of pre-qualifying and qualifying community education training (3) obtain a range of views about that training (4) identify opportunities for training in multi-disciplinary and partnership work and (5) offer recommendations for future pre-qualifying and qualifying community education training.

Method

Given the range of community education working contexts, data were gathered from 16 separate data sources which included users of community education, community education experts, employers in local authorities and the voluntary sector, recent graduates from training, training providers and a wide range of key stakeholders representing national organisations, local authority managers, voluntary organisations, the civil service and a health board. Data gathering methods included document analysis, group discussions, in-depth interviews, questionnaires and invitations to comment over the Internet. All this gave insight into a range of views about community education and its training but it did not give generalisability: this report provides illuminative data only.

Findings

Findings about demand and supply:

- Comprehensive national statistics are not currently collected for community education
- In 1996/7 most paid community education staff working in local authorities held temporary or sessional posts
- In 1999, in the voluntary sector unpaid workers outnumbered paid workers (but not all these workers were concerned with the broad field of community education)
- Volunteers were less likely to have professional community education qualifications than paid workers
- Local authorities known to have been main providers of community education services were still the largest employers of qualified community education workers, although training providers believed that more graduates than in the past were taking up employment in the voluntary sector
- While employers would have liked recruits to have a Bachelor-level degree in community education, experience of similar or related work was just as important

- The most common mode of study for a professional community education qualification was institution-based and full time, although more part time and work-based courses were available than in the past

Findings about what community education work entails:

- Users of community education perceived that the workers exercised 'people skills' to motivate others, build confidence and handle stress and conflict. They liaised with others on the users' behalf, organised events, gave information and advice and facilitated many things, including structured training
- Employers confirmed that tasks relating to the six CeVe competencies were often carried out, especially those that related to engaging with the community and managing resources
- Expert group discussants identified many tasks under each of the six headings but added five new headings: 'Developing the Profession', 'Evaluating Achievement', 'Working in Partnership', 'Promoting Economic Regeneration' and 'Working with People'
- Some expert group discussants thought community education needed to be more specific about what its work was
- The expert groups' task lists tended to emphasise the *how* of doing things in contrast to the SCVQ's workforce survey task list which tended to specify *what* was done

Findings about the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for community education work:

Skills

- Community education users thought that workers primarily needed skills in organising things and in working with people to motivate and encourage them. This including knowing when it was appropriate to stand back
- Key stakeholders emphasised the need for practical skills and the ability to apply them in a broad variety of situations. They also stressed group management and outreach skills for which good communication was essential. Management skills were needed in many areas, however, as well as skills in research and evaluation and specific teaching and learning techniques. It was important that the latter were underpinned by a clear educational rationale. Voluntary sector stakeholders in particular stressed the importance of specific skills including fund-raising and IT, although these were important in every data providing group.
- Employers in all groups confirmed the importance of all these skills

Knowledge

- Users of community education emphasised the breadth of knowledge that was expected of community education workers

- Key stakeholders also emphasised breadth and stressed politics, legislation in various areas, human and social psychology, pedagogy, philosophy and having an overview of employer interests in a range of areas
- Voluntary sector employers agreed with the above but added knowledge about education systems and how they worked, how to use the media in campaigns and how to take entrepreneurial action. Local authority employers concurred but also stressed evaluation and research and an understanding of the scope of work in the voluntary sector

Attitudes

- With respect to attitudes, community education users wanted community education workers to be friendly, open, trustworthy and fair
- Key stakeholders wanted them to be friendly and approachable with a commitment to social justice and the value of education and learning. They felt that community education workers had to care genuinely about others, be flexible, self-controlled and realistic
- Employers in all groups thought it important for community education workers to be committed to equal opportunities, respect others, be flexible, committed to helping others achieve for themselves and able to take a broad view of things

Findings about changes:

- Expert group discussants, particularly those working in local authorities, felt that community education had long been under-resourced and undervalued. There was general agreement that the future was uncertain but that more collaborative working and increased accountability would be required
- Key stakeholders tended to believe that community education in local authorities faced more change than work in the voluntary sector
- Some thought the changes needed were small in scale but others believed they had to be radical. One of the changes thought necessary was dropping the 'jargon' of community education; another was that searching questions about the nature of community education had to be asked
- Other requirements were thought to be more people who were capable of leading change, greater use of community profiling and resources auditing, giving priority to social inclusion, more strategic thinking to influence decisions, more partnership working to integrate services and more measuring of outcomes against performance indicators
- Most key stakeholders believed that community education was well placed to address social inclusion, active citizenship and lifelong learning
- They also believed it was very difficult to practise genuine multi-disciplinary, partnership working; barriers included lack of time, poor communication, professional defensiveness and misunderstanding, mistrust and the nature of organisational structures

- Most employers expected changes in the next three years. These would include greater customer orientation, with more face to face work, more use of information technology, an increased need for specific and basic skills, the movement of community education work into other services, more use of flexible learning methods, adaptation to take account of Community Learning Plans and Strategies and more partnership working

Findings about training needs:

- Employer respondents in all groups indicated that their staff needed training in various areas of management, information technology, a wide range of knowledge, monitoring, evaluation and research, education and training methods and how to work with others. Voluntary organisation and additional public sector employers particularly stressed funding and fund-raising issues
- Recent graduates wanted training in various knowledge areas specific to their work, information technology, presentational skills, monitoring and research and partnership working
- These training needs support the findings of other training needs analyses

Findings about the strengths and weaknesses of current training:

- Providers of institution-based degree-level training thought training provided a sound knowledge base, linked theory and practice, was delivered by high quality experienced staff who maintained connections with the field and increasingly offered flexible modes and access, thus widening opportunities for students
- These providers thought training could benefit from some course updating and that some courses were content-heavy. They identified severe problems with placements
- Providers of solely work-based degree-level training considered it linked theory and practice very strongly but kept an educational focus
- Weaknesses were thought to include its high cost and the possibility that students might feel isolated. Some materials were thought to need updating
- Providers of HNC-level training believed its content was good, articulating both with CeVe requirements and with the content of degree courses. This made it a valuable bridge between further and higher education. Their staff base was felt to be strong because staff remained in practice or took regular secondment, and courses were thought to be flexible
- Perceptions of weakness included limited training for partnership work and the difficulties of updating staff
- Key stakeholders varied in their views about training. Some agreed that it gave students time for reflection and theory and there was acceptance that courses were more flexible than in the past

- There was a belief, however, that some courses were badly taught and that there was too little opportunity for challenging inter-student debate. There was thought to be too little focus on putting skills into practice, while course content was believed to be over-narrow and lack genuine opportunity for training with others. Other criticisms were of unsatisfactory placements, some remaining rigidity in course modes and access, and training institutions being out of touch with employers and their needs
- Most employers who responded thought their staff had been prepared very or quite well for their work. Graduates were thought better than they used to be and some were believed to have a good theoretical grounding. Work-based training was especially commended
- Main weaknesses according to employers were difficulty in practising skills, out of date training, graduates from training who lacked both interpersonal and specific skills, graduates who could not distance themselves from the community and others who were poorly prepared for policy-level and/ or research work
- Most recent graduates from training believed they had received quality training, especially in linking theory and practice. Placements were thought valuable but also the diversity of course coverage, training in thinking skills which included critical analysis, encouragement to independent action and the focus on professionalism and accountability. Many thought they had received good support
- Criticisms included outdated learning materials, limited use of computers, weak coverage of financial matters and unsatisfactory joint sessions with other community education students

Findings about other training issues:

Placements:

- Training providers, almost all at institution-based degree-level, identified difficulties in placement availability, quality, supervision and cost
- Recent graduates valued placements highly as a genuine experience of work but some criticised the supervision and support they had received
- While almost all local authority main providers of community education hosted placements, employers in other groups were less likely to do this and had often not been asked to do so
- Employers identified more advantages than disadvantages to hosting placements
- Advantages included students bringing fresh ideas, raising staff awareness of their own capabilities, having an extra person around and having an open channel of communication with training providers
- Disadvantages included demands on supervisors' time, the risk of ill feeling in an organisation if the student was not good, no choice of students,

students being poorly prepared for placement and students knowing more about theory than method. There were comments that different tutors had different expectations and that support could be improved

Collaborative work:

- Training providers at institution-based degree level claimed they prepared students to work collaboratively through the placements, through input from outside speakers, through joint/ shared courses and through options, although one provider thought more could be done. Providers of work-based training thought that when the students were gathered together they provided a multi-disciplinary setting in themselves
- Informants generally thought funding was needed to improve this aspect of community education training and work. Less professional defensiveness as well as commitment to the notion were both necessary also

APEL/APL:

- Requirements for academic qualifications for mature student entry to training had been lowered or dispensed with, but there was little evidence that the APEL/APL concepts had been applied more radically. While the idea was attractive, making it work was believed to be hard

Recommendations

In brief, these are concerned with:

- Making arrangements for the collection of national statistical information about community education
- Embedding learning from experience more deeply into the development of community education professionals
- Conducting a study to evaluate the notion of placements in community education training
- Conducting a study of that part of the voluntary sector with a community education/ community learning interest to clarify training needs in this sector as well as the relative values of generic and work-specific training within it
- Devising an entitlement to continuing professional development for all community education staff
- Putting an induction programme and probationary period in place for all newly qualified community education staff
- Devising an entitlement to continuing professional development for all those involved in community education training
- Developing opportunities for genuine multi-professional training
- Developing schemes for accrediting previous learning and experience so that they can integrate into a network of community education qualifications

- Ensuring that CeVe endorsements are standardised and systematic with clear criteria and methods
- Drawing up a clear overview of routes into training
- Ensuring that community education staff commit themselves to continuing professional development throughout their working lives

Options for training

- Option 1 involves retaining current training structures but working to improve them in various ways
- Option 2 involves moving towards a 'sandwich' model of training
- Option 3 involves moving towards work-based training as the main route to a professional qualification for community education

These options need not be mutually exclusive.

1: Introduction: Background and Method

1.1 Background

In April 2000 the Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) commissioned the Scottish Council for Research in Education (SCRE) to provide consultancy to a Review of training for community education. The Review was being conducted some two years after publication of the report 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a), which had re-stated the purpose of community education in terms of promoting personal development, building community capacity and investing in community learning. The report had also seen community education as instrumental, through these three functions, in delivering Government policy on lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship. 'Communities: Change Through Learning' was expected to have generated changes within the profession of community education, and as it had been many years since community education had last taken stock either of its work or of the training for that work, the Review was asked to do both.

Beginning in March, the Review was due to end in summer 2001, although SCRE's input was planned to last only until the end of November 2000. However, as the complexity of the remit became apparent, deliberations within the Advisory Committee to clarify its scope delayed the beginning of data collection so that the period for consultancy was extended to mid-February 2001.

These deliberations were necessary. Several aspects of the work facing SCRE were problematic, but the greatest was the size of the double task. Traditionally, many community education workers have been employed in local authority community education or education departments with a remit for community work, with many others going into the voluntary sector. Local Government reorganisation in 1995/6 disaggregated the erstwhile 12 authorities into 32, with a consequent diminishing of the authorities' size and funding. In some authorities, community education service sections of education departments disappeared and the work was taken into other departments such as leisure and recreation. Changes in the authorities gave rise to changes in employment patterns and there was a belief that the voluntary sector was becoming the main employer of community education graduates. The task of functional mapping was therefore more complex than would have been the case before local Government re-organisation, and the importance of taking full account of work in the voluntary sector was clear.

However, although not all its organisations concern themselves with work in the broad field of community education, the voluntary sector is huge. Not only are there great numbers of organisations (there are around 45,000 in the sector overall) and projects, but their scope is vast. The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) carries the names of approximately 33,000 records in its database, and its Annual Review for 1999/00 lists some 330 national and 640 local member organisations with interests in very widely ranging areas: the traditional categories of youth work, adult work and community work give little

real indication of the breadth of activity, which is often highly focused, done in the voluntary sector. The list of organisations which responded to a questionnaire as part of the current work is appended and gives an illustration both of the diversity of this range and of the specific nature of much of the work. It would be impossible for a small study such as the current consultancy to take proper account of such size and diversity.

Early in the Review, then, the Advisory Committee acknowledged the immensity of the task of mapping the work. And in view of the multiplicity of in-service training available to community education workers, it also recognised the impossibility of the SCRE team's being able to investigate all training. After much debate it was agreed that the Review should concentrate on training which led to a professional qualification, with HNCs being an important rung in the training ladder (hence the focus is on pre-qualifying and qualifying professional training). It was also accepted that, in keeping with the time and funding constraints of the project, the SCRE team would report at 'broad brush' level.

It is important to note that the need for a review of in-service training remains, and that the broad brush approach taken in this report will leave details requiring further investigation.

1.2 Aims

The consultants were therefore charged with

1. Drawing up a map of the main tasks of community education work and identifying the skills, knowledge and attitudes they required.
2. Identifying the main components of pre-qualifying and qualifying professional training being offered.
3. Obtaining the views of a range of key stakeholders in community education about that training.
4. Identifying opportunities for training in multi-disciplinary and partnership work.
5. Offering recommendations for the future of pre-qualifying and qualifying professional training in community education.

In addition, it was hoped that the work on pre-qualifying and qualifying professional training would yield insight into in-service issues and provide a platform for further work.

1.3 Method

When the remit changed as described above, changes had to be made to the research methods first proposed. Here we outline the data collection methods as they evolved and were used, rather than as they were originally planned.

Data collection was unusually complex. Information was gathered from 16 separate sources in all, and through a variety of methods which included documentary analysis, group meetings of various kinds, varying types of

questionnaires, interviews conducted face-to-face where possible and in four cases over the telephone, and over the Internet (through the Review's Web site and e-mail). Because of this complexity we have summarised the data providers and their contribution to the project in Figure 1.1 below.

Figure 1.1: A grid of data collection and analysis

Data provider	Response rate/ number involved	Collection method	Mode of analysis	Information given	Contributed to
Users of community education	3 groups of 6–8 people at each	Focus group discussion	Manual analysis of recorded discussions	What users want from a community education worker	Map of main tasks
Community education experts	3 groups of up to 16 people. 42 experts in all	Expert group discussions aiming for consensus	Consensus reached in groups and through facilitation by researchers	The main tasks undertaken by community education workers	Map of main tasks
Community education worker validators	108 invited to validate; 40 responded	Validation form listing main tasks identified by experts	Statistics Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS)	Confirmation of expert group conclusions; expectations of change	Map of main tasks
'Other profession' validators	14 invited to validate; 3 responded	Validation form listing main tasks identified by experts	Manual	Confirmation of expert group conclusions; expectations of change	Map of main tasks
Documents (course handbooks, prospectuses surveys etc)	105	By request and accumulation	Manual and database entry	Various, but especially training programme details	Training Review
Degree-level HEI-based training providers	4 (all)	Interview and correspondence	Interviews tape-recorded; analysis from transcripts plus notes	Institution-based, degree level professional training	Training Review
Degree-level work-based training providers	2	Interview and correspondence	Interviews tape-recorded; analysis from transcripts plus notes	Work-based degree level professional training	Training Review
HNC-level FE-based training providers	Four (all)	Interview and correspondence	Interviews tape-recorded; analysis from transcripts plus notes	Institution-based, HNC level training	Training Review
Key stakeholders in community education	13 (representation from 5 national organisations, 3 LAs, 3 voluntary organisations, a health board, civil service)	Interview	Interviews tape-recorded; analysis from transcripts plus notes	Skills, knowledge, attitudes needed in work; current training as a preparation	Map of main tasks Training Review

Data provider	Response rate/ number involved	Collection method	Mode of analysis	Information given	Contributed to
Employers:		Questionnaire	SPSS plus manual analysis of open responses	Community education employment patterns; type of work done; skills, knowledge and attitudes needed for it; training needs	Map of main tasks and Training Review
LAs	All sent quest'res 28 LAs responded and 56 depts (36 main providers of c/ed, 20 others).				
Voluntary sector	152 sent, 47 returned				
Comm'ity and new c. schools	18 sent, 12 returned				
FE colleges	38 sent, 18 returned				
Other public sector employers	37 sent out, 14 returned				
Recent graduates	32 sent out, 16 returned. All training providers gave 2 contact names and any extras were also followed up.	Questionnaires	Manual	Training received; value in relation to work done; current training needs	Training Review
Various	10, including responses from degree providers to specific late questions	Internet	Manual	Various	Map of main tasks and Training review

It should be noted that the information from local authorities is particularly strong, because all except four authorities returned questionnaires and there were multiple replies from many (see Appendix 1).

1.3.3 How generalisable is the information?

A decision was taken early in the project that, given the huge range of community education work contexts, breadth of consultation was of paramount importance. The number of data sources listed in Figure 1.1 reflects this. With the exception of the questionnaire to recent graduates, for which we were reliant on training providers to give names and contact details of past students, and which data set was never intended to be large, every attempt was made to ensure breadth of representation. Where a total data set was small (as with health boards, for example) responses were invited from representatives of its whole population. Otherwise, strenuous efforts were made to take account of geographic, cultural and economic, gender and work context differences. Expert group participants, for example, were invited on the basis of a stratified random selection from the Community Learning Scotland (CLS) Directory (CLS, 2000). Participants occupied a range of posts from basic to senior management level; meetings were held in the north-east and west of Scotland as well as the capital to enable participants to travel from more distant locations. Invitations to validate the expert groups' conclusions were sent to over a hundred other community education workers chosen by stratified random selection, as well as to managers in related

fields such as social work, health and housing. Focus group locations took in city work in the east and west of Scotland but also a more rural area to the north, and covered youth and adult work. Questionnaires were sent to all local authorities with a request for distribution to all departments they considered relevant, to a randomly stratified sample of voluntary organisations drawn from the SCVO database with the assistance of SCVO staff and to other employers as listed in Figure 1.1. And so on.

In all this, however, breadth and time/funding constraints together mean that while we gained insight into a wide range of views we were unable to tap opinions in sufficient numbers to claim generalisability. The information we have is simply what our informants tell us. It is not representative of the views of other people within their groups. Where there is consistency across all data sets we have pointed it out, but this consistency has no statistical significance.

The data contained in this report are therefore illustrative of a wide range of opinion. If representative data are required then further work designed for that purpose is needed.

1.4 Note on the report

1.4.1 Terminology

In writing this report we faced several difficulties in deciding what terms we ought to use. A very early problem was how to refer to what 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a) called an 'approach' to community education. We were aware that some local authorities but not all had stopped referring to 'community education', but we rapidly became equally aware that there was no consensus for the use of any other term. Although some will regard our use of it as out of date, throughout the report we have retained the term 'community education' if only because there *is* no consensus and it was training for 'community education' on which we were asked to report. We would not, however, wish it to be supposed that this choice carries any greater significance. In this report, 'community education' is used as a cross-sectoral and general term.

With respect to the part of our remit concerned with mapping functions, there was debate within the Review team about the level of work on which to focus. Again this had implications for terms: perhaps, we thought, we ought to refer to the work done by 'community educators', because the phrase 'community educator' implied professional status and we wanted to link tasks to training leading to a professional qualification. On the other hand, many community educators had reached senior management level in their work and the Review was concerned with activities at a more basic level. Our eventual decision was to use the term 'community education worker' throughout. It is intended to relate to people not long out of training and to discussions about the work appropriate for them. This might differ amongst local authorities and voluntary sector organisations, as well as according to the length and type of individuals' experience in community

education work. In practice, many community education workers are believed to operate at far beyond novice level.

Another difficulty lay in finding a crisp and accurate way to refer to the training at the heart of our work. As stated above, this was training for community education at degree level and at the level of HNC where courses, although not qualifying, gave training in some aspect of community education. In other professions, this kind of training might be called 'pre-service'. Though neat, this term would have been inappropriate in connection with community education training, both because all students are required to have undertaken some experience or 'service' and because many are following work-based training pathways. Hence we use the rather cumbersome 'pre-qualifying and qualifying' training. It is not elegant, but it is clear.

1.4.2 Presentation of questionnaire data

Questionnaire data have been reported at the levels of main local authority providers of community education, other local authority departments, voluntary sector employers, community schools (both new and old), further education colleges and other public sector employers. In view of the small data sets which resulted from the questionnaires we have minimised the use of tables, believing that to present data in tabular form gives the impression that it carries more weight than is the case. Where tables have been included, 'don't knows' and 'no responses' have usually been omitted for the sake of clarity. Responses are given in numbers rather than percentages, although the explanation associated with each table tries to give some idea of proportion and the extent of agreement through use of terms such as 'almost all', which means three quarters or more, 'most' which always means over half, 'some' or 'several' which mean less than half and 'a few' which means one or two.

1.4.3 Presentation of interview data

As far as was consistent with preserving participants' anonymity, we have identified information sources. Hence a view has been noted as coming from a local authority representative, a national organisation representative, and so on. To strengthen anonymity, the pronouns 'he' and 'she' do not link to the gender of the original informant. As with the questionnaire responses, we have tried to give some idea of the strength of opinion held for each view and the extent of agreement. The comments made in the above paragraph about terms like 'most' and 'several' apply to these data also. However, we would like to stress that all the people interviewed were carefully chosen for their ability to express well informed views. The fact that an opinion might have come from just one person does not in any way suggest it is less important or less valid than an opinion with which nearly everyone agreed. It is often the insightful comment made by one individual that gives real illumination.

1.4.4 Organisation of the report

The main body of this report is divided into nine chapters, of which this is the first. Chapter 2, 'Demand and Supply: A fragmented picture', broadly outlines

the nature of changes in community education since 1975, presents some basic statistical information relevant to community education, and comments on its value to decision-makers.

Chapter 3, 'A Map of Community Education Work' draws out from a variety of sources what the main tasks in community education work at present are thought to be, and ends by making a brief comparison between the task types identified by experts brought together for the current work and those identified in a recent workforce survey conducted in the voluntary sector.

Chapter 4, 'Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes' sets out which of these it was thought a community education worker needs to undertake basic-level work, drawing on the opinions of community education users, experts in the field, key stakeholders and employers.

Chapter 5, 'A Changing Workplace' focuses on changes in community education since the publication of the report 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a). Expert group data give some insight into current feelings about the state of community education; key stakeholders discuss their views of the extent to which change is now needed, and why, and what the implications of current Government policies might be for community education. Employers' views of the kinds of changes they think might be coming in the next three years are summarised.

The brief Chapter 6, 'Training Needs' provides a transition from the work focus of Chapters 2 to 5 to the training focus of Chapters 7 and 8. Employers outline training needs from their perspectives, recent graduates give insight into the areas where they feel training would benefit them, and these findings are put in the context of others coming from two earlier analyses of training needs.

Chapter 7, 'Current Training', is long because it contains most of the information directly relevant to training that was gathered in the course of this Review. It summarises what training is available to those wanting to step on to the current ladder of training that leads to professional status, then moves to examine what, from different perspectives, are seen as the strengths and weaknesses of that training.

The penultimate Chapter, 8, is entitled 'Other Training Issues' and addresses a number of topics which while not strictly either strengths or weaknesses in training are nevertheless important, either because they affect or are integral to training. They include an examination of placements, collaborative work, the use of APEL and APL and equality of access to training.

Chapter 9, 'Discussion and Options' draws out what seem to the SCRE team to be the most important implications of the Review and offers three models for training, together with the rationale on which each is based.

Every chapter except 1 and 9 ends with a summary of the data presented within it and a brief comment on its main implications. Some but not all of these implications are raised again in the final chapter.

2: Demand and Supply: a fragmented picture

2.1 Introduction

The complexities of community education work have long been a matter for debate and review. In 1975 the Alexander Committee recommended the bringing together of the local authorities' then separate adult education, youth and community services to form community education services (Scottish Education Department, 1975). The extent to which this newly defined service was able to cohere is doubtful, a situation which has given rise to much debate; for example, there has been a long-standing discussion, lasting into the present, about how far the skills exercised by those working in the many different community education contexts are generic and therefore transferable across all those settings, and how far specific.

Further complexity was introduced by local government re-organisation in 1995/6, which disaggregated the 12 existing local authorities into 32. What had been large authorities disappeared, funding arrangements changed and department responsibilities shifted. The consequences for community education within local authorities are still making themselves felt as the service finds itself sharing departments with other services.

The voluntary sector too has faced changes. The re-organisation of local authorities had knock-on effects: to quote the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations' Annual Review for 1999, the voluntary sector has 'continued to feel the aftershocks of local government reorganisation in 1996/7 and of tight limitation of local government expenditure'. In addition, the introduction of the National Lottery had its own considerable impact on fund-raising and related activities.

In 1998 a major review of local authority community education provision ('Promoting Learning – Developing Communities', COSLA, 1998) drew attention to a drop in provision of community education opportunities and funding since 1996, and identified a number of areas for change. Later in the same year the Scottish Office report 'Communities: Change Through Learning (Scottish Office, 1998a) made many similar points but also set out its new vision of community education for Scotland, which was of:

> a dynamic learning society. A democratic and socially just society that should enable all its citizens, in particular those who are socially excluded, to develop their potential to the full ...
>
> (Scottish Office, 1998a)

Still regarded as a discrete discipline, community education was also seen as 'an approach to education, not a sector' which would concentrate on promoting personal development, building community capacity and investing in community learning.

2.2 Dearth of national statistics

So much change makes it desirable to have a clear national picture of what the work is and where those who are trained for it are working. But this is difficult. Comprehensive national statistics tracking the destinations of those who have completed professional training and the numbers of paid and unpaid full and sessional staff in both voluntary and local authority sectors would help, but there are none. Within its remit, the national training organisation (PAULO) now has the task of gathering and interpreting information about the field to inform development within the sector's occupational groups. Working across the whole of the UK, however, PAULO is undertaking a demanding task, and being recognised only in January 2000 has not yet been able to publish comprehensive information.

2.2.1 Numbers of paid and voluntary community education staff in local authorities

The Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED) gathers information from local authorities about the numbers of paid and voluntary community education staff and the broad areas in which they work, but not from voluntary organisations and their staff (which are the largest component of community education provision). And SEED acknowledges that some of the information from local authorities is based on estimate. The most recently available statistics were published in 1998 (Scottish Office, 1998b), based on data supplied in 1996/7, now four years ago. They show that in 1996/7 there were around 14,200 paid community education staff working in local authorities. Of these, 10,600 (75%) were in temporary or sessional posts. Additionally there were 14,900 voluntary staff involved in the work, a greater number than that of the paid workers.

2.2.2 Numbers of paid and voluntary staff in the voluntary sector

The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations (SCVO) conducted a workforce survey in 1998 (SCVO, 1999) which reveals that there were around 45,000 organisations and 100,000 paid staff in the voluntary sector as a whole, but many times this number of volunteers: 300,000 in the general charities category alone and perhaps twice that in the wider voluntary sector (ie including non-charitable voluntary organisations). SCVO points out the difficulty of establishing the number of people working and volunteering in voluntary organisations:

> Official statistics measure employment group employees by industry (manufacturing, agriculture etc), rather than by sector (voluntary, public, private) ... Volunteering is often similarly obscured by the lack of distinction made between volunteering in statutory settings such as schools and hospitals and volunteering within voluntary organisations.
>
> (SCVO, 1999)

It should be pointed out, however, that not all voluntary sector organisations work in the broad field of community education.

There are other surveys – for example, Learning Link Scotland's eponymous audit of adult learning in the voluntary sector (Learning Link Scotland, 1999) – but they remain separate from each other. As a result, we have only a partial picture of the potential employment area for community education.

2.2.3 Numbers of qualified community education staff (estimated)

In the survey carried out for the current work (see Figure 1.1, Chapter 1, for information about the employers' questionnaire), high proportions (well over three quarters) of employers in all groups indicated the presence of people with either a training or working background in community education in their organisations or departments. Further, nearly all employers indicated that they would consider recruiting individuals with community education backgrounds.

Respondents were asked to give estimates of the numbers of their paid and voluntary staff who held a professional community education qualification.

Table 2.1: Numbers of organisations with staff holding a qualification in community education (degree, diploma or certificate) by proportions of those staff

	Voluntary organisations n= 47		Community/ New C'ity schools n=12		FE Colleges n=18		LA departments (main providers) n=36		LA departments (other providers) n=20		Additional Public Sector employers n=14	
	paid	volun.	paid	volun.	paid	volun.	paid	volun.	paid	volun.	paid	volun.
all	1	0	4	0	1	0	10	0	1	0	0	0
most	2	0	0	0	0	0	14	0	4	0	3	0
some	26	9	8	1	12	0	9	7	8	0	7	2
none	12	13	0	7	2	2	2	17	3	0	1	2

The numbers in this table suggest that unpaid community education staff are less likely to have a professional qualification in community education than those who are paid. At one level this seems an obvious statement, but it gives rise to questions of how necessary a professional qualification is to obtain paid employment and to further a career, as well as to how far voluntary workers require training. For the present Review, these are important considerations to which we shall return.

These figures also suggest that those local authority departments who are traditionally the main providers of community education might be more likely than other employers to have professionally-trained community education workers on their workforce. We do not have the data to explain this, but perhaps local authorities are thought to offer a better paid and more coherent career structure than the voluntary sector, or perhaps graduates feel that their professional training has equipped them more for local authority than for voluntary sector work. However, this picture may give an historical perspective: in interview a degree-level training provider expressed belief that while the traditional providers of community education services (ie local authorities) might have more existing staff, they were not now taking on as many newly trained people as was the voluntary sector.

2.2.4 *Level of importance in recruitment of various community education qualifications*

Employers were asked if various community education qualifications and work experience were thought desirable when they were recruiting individuals. Over half the respondents in all groups considered a degree at Bachelor's level desirable, although such a degree does not seem to be as highly valued in the voluntary sector as in the others. It is noteworthy that the frequencies with which other qualifications were thought desirable were lower. About two thirds of respondents in all groups put a high value on experience of similar or related work. There may be implications here for the level of professional training on which training providers might wish to concentrate.

Table 2.2: Numbers of employers finding various professional qualifications and work experience desirable and important

Qual'n/ exp'ce	Voluntary organisations n=47		Community/ New C'ity schools n=12		FE Colleges n=18		LA departments (main providers) n=36		LA departments (other providers) n=20		Other Public Sector employers n=14	
	D'able	Imp.	D'able	Imp.	D'able	Imp.	D'able	Imp.	D'able	Imp.	D'able	Imp.
1	26	20	11	9	17	15	35	32	15	14	8	6
2	17	11	6	4	11	7	29	25	13	11	6	4
3	16	11	1	1	9	9	3	2	7	6	1	0
4	10	6	0	0	7	7	3	2	7	5	1	0
5	9	6	1	0	7	7	1	0	4	3	2	1
6	32	32	7	7	12	12	26	24	14	13	9	9
7	28	28	7	7	11	11	21	17	15	15	9	9

Key:
1: Bachelor's degree
2: Post graduate degree
3: Higher National Diploma
4: Higher National Certificate
5: Certificate in Higher Education
6: Experience in the same area
7: Experience in a related area

Asked to indicate which broad subject areas of qualifications were preferred, employers in most groups most often chose community education. The exceptions were employers in further education colleges, where education, arts and social sciences were more often chosen, and additional public sector employers more often ticked social sciences and maths.

2.2.5 *Numbers of students in community education training*

In the course of the current study the six providers of professional qualifying status community education training and the four at pre-qualifying HNC level were asked how many full and how many part-time students were on community education courses for the session 2000/01. Nine were able to supply estimated information, which is summarised in Table 2.3 below. Please be mindful, however, of the several reservations concerning these figures noted below the table.

Table 2.3: Numbers of students in community education training, session 2000/01 (training providers' estimates)

Type of Qualification	Full-time	Part-time	Total
institution-based degree	326	67	393
work-based apprenticeship mode	11	17	28
distance mode	5	0	5
in-service mode	62	0	62
post-graduate	40	122	162
Total all degree-level courses	444	206	650
HNCs (underestimate)	not known	not known	36
			686

These figures suggest that most students in community education training are full-time and institution-based. However, several warnings must be given about the reliability of this information. One is that some of the figures are based on estimates while some are not. Another is that what constitutes part-time and full-time study is not clear, particularly when work-based training is taken into account. Is in-service training considered to be full or part-time? Views on this vary between institutions. The issue may be important in the light of a degree provider's perception that there had been a recent shift in his institution towards part-time study. A third warning is that because courses do not always have a fixed entry point it was not always clear when a student belonged to session 2000/01. Finally, the information supplied by FE colleges was especially patchy, and we were unable to make the full-time and part-time distinction (although interview data suggested that most of the HNC students were part-time).

Many training providers made it clear that if they were required to provide information of this kind they would do so.

2.2.6 Student destinations

In interview, training providers were asked if their institutions gathered data on student destinations after they had completed the courses. There was little systematic collection of this information. Of the ten training providers, only two (one degree and one HNC provider) supplied it to the Review, and having no data from the other eight, we considered what there was too slight to include here.

Training providers identified two main difficulties with tracking student destinations. One was at institutional level: records were collected and kept centrally so that information about community education students could not be disaggregated. Another was pragmatic in that the institutions were reliant on students providing information when asked, so that the information gathered was almost inevitably incomplete.

Although they were unable to cite figures to substantiate their points, most degree-level training providers were of the opinion that more students moved into work in the voluntary sector than had been the case in the past. While local

authorities might be the major employers of existing community-education trained staff, they were believed less likely than the voluntary sector organisations to take on new community-education trained staff. One degree provider thought that fewer than half of the institution's last graduate group had gone into local authority employment, and of these only half described their position as that of 'community education worker'.

Students in work while they followed their training were usually believed to remain in that work once they had qualified, although they were expected to look for promotion and/ or a salary increase.

2.3 Summary and comment

2.3.1 Summary

Currently, although the recently created NTO PAULO has begun to gather statistical information, there are no comprehensive statistics at national level to show the numbers of students preparing for a career in community education, or where successful students work. Information from local authorities collected in 1996/7 shows that most paid community education staff were in temporary or sessional posts, and that voluntary staff outnumbered those who were paid. Similarly, information gathered by SCVO shows that in the voluntary sector there are many more unpaid than paid workers, although not all of these are concerned with the broad field of community education.

Information collected for the current Review suggests that volunteers are less likely to hold professional qualifications in community education than are paid workers, which raises questions about career development as well as implications for the kind of training received by volunteers. Within local authorities, departments known to be main providers of community education in the past are still the largest employers of professionally qualified community education workers.

The evidence suggests that although many employers would like the staff they recruited to have a community education degree at Bachelor level, experience of similar or related work may be just as important to them. This may be particularly true in the voluntary sector where the proportions of employers who emphasised the desirability and importance of degrees were relatively low – perhaps because of the breadth of work carried out. It was not particularly important to further education colleges and additional public sector employers to seek degrees in community education.

The most common mode of study for a professional community education qualification seems to be institution-based and full time, with the numbers of students taking up work-based options much smaller. Training providers at degree level believed that more graduates than in the past were taking up employment in the voluntary sector, rather than with local authorities.

2.3.2 Comment

Earlier in this section we commented that some of the Scottish Office data from local authorities was based on estimates now out of date. Through its workforce survey (SCVO, 1999) the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations has provided sound and valuable insight into the general charities category of voluntary organisations, but this represents less than half the total number of voluntary organisations operating in Scotland. Some numerical data were gathered in the course of this Review, but we have already made the point in the Introduction that the information on which this report is based is not representative of wider populations. Hence the picture we present of numbers of paid and professionally-qualified community education staff in employment and the importance to employers of various types of qualifications is no more than a 'snapshot' of situations in the responding organisations. In addition, we have pointed to the incomplete nature of information about student numbers and destinations available from the providers of pre-qualifying and qualifying professional community education training.

None of this amounts to a clear national picture, either of likely employment opportunities for community education workers or of the numbers of community education students in pre-qualifying and qualifying professional training. When numerical information is gathered separately, for different purposes and using different criteria, it cannot easily be brought together. If community education wishes to consolidate its status as a profession, and if training is to be matched to employer needs, it could be helpful if some agreement were reached upon what statistical information would be useful, and a reliable and consistent way of gathering it were to be established.

3: A Map of Community Education Work

3.1 Introduction

A review of training for whatever employment must be able to set that training against needs in the field which students are being prepared to enter, or in which they already work. Differing perceptions of the nature of community education, which is currently under discussion, and the change in work patterns referred to in the previous section make it especially necessary for this review to re-visit the nature of community education work. For this reason the SCRE team was asked to conduct a 'functional analysis' of the tasks facing community education workers, if possible identify the skills those tasks demanded and find out if the work was perceived to be changing.

To address this task we draw on four main data sources: discussion amongst users of community education at three focus groups, similar discussions at three meetings of community education experts, validation of the expert group views by 40 community education workers who were not otherwise involved, and employers' opinions expressed through the medium of a questionnaire.

The users' groups provide a broad view of the kinds of work that community education workers do. We begin with this information, then comment on employers' views of the frequency of community education-related tasks in their organisations and departments. Next we draw on data from the expert groups to reach a more specific breakdown of work, and end the chapter with a brief comparison of this breakdown and the skills/ tasks identified by a SCVO workforce survey (SCVO, 1999).

3.2 A users' perspective

Users spoke with appreciation of their community education workers, particularly valuing their ability to motivate and build confidence, network, liaise and facilitate, organise events, structure training and provide information and advice. One group of young adults commented on the value of their community education worker's stress and conflict management skills. A second group, composed mainly of mature individuals with very clear ideas of what they wanted, expressed gratitude for the help they had been given to understand the procedures set up by various bodies for securing funds and resources: these had enabled them to develop projects on their own. '[The community education worker] oils the wheels,' they said.

3.3 Task types frequent in employment

Existing CeVe guidelines (Guidelines for Graduate and Post Graduate Qualifying, Community Education Training, CeVe, 1995) list competences for community education under six headings which are familiar to community education practitioners. Those working in community education must: engage with the community, develop relevant learning and educational opportunities, empower the participants, organise and manage resources, practise community

education within different settings and use evaluative practice to assess and implement appropriate changes. The questionnaire to employers offered a list of tasks which were closely related to these headings, and respondents were asked to indicate how often each was carried out. Over half the employers in each group confirmed that tasks under each of the CeVe headings were carried out either very or fairly often in their organisations or departments. Tasks related to engagement with the local community and organising and managing resources were particularly frequent for all groups. For about a quarter of the voluntary sector organisations, tasks under the remaining headings were carried out either infrequently or not at all. Table 3.1 shows the breakdown of responses.

Table 3.1: The frequency of CeVe-related tasks in various employment groups

Task type	Voluntary organisations n=47		Community/ New C'ity schools n=12		FE Colleges n=18		LA departments (main providers) n=36		LA departments (other employers) n=20		Other Public Sector employers n=14	
	very/ fairly often	time to time/ not at all	very/ fairly often	time to time/ not at all	very/ fairly often	time to time/ not at all	very/ fairly often	time to time/ not at all	very/ fairly often	time to time/ not at all	very/ fairly often	time to time/ not at all
A	41	4	12	0	17	1	36	0	20	0	13	1
B	30	13	11	1	17	1	36	0	15	5	9	5
C	33	11	9	3	12	6	33	3	17	3	11	3
D	40	5	12	0	18	0	35	1	19	1	13	1
E	32	13	10	1	17	1	35	1	18	2	14	0
F	33	12	8	3	16	2	32	4	14	6	4	0

Key:
A: Engaging with the community
B: Developing learning and educational opportunities
C: Empowering individuals and groups within the community ('Helping individuals and groups achieve independently')
D: Organising and managing resources
E: Practising community education within different settings
F: Using evaluative practice to assess and implement change

3.4 Expert identification of main tasks

3.4.1 A note on method

It has been acknowledged (Miller, 1988) that functional analyses are best carried out by those who work in the field. For this aspect of the current study the SCRE team brought together, in three separate groups, as wide a group of community education experts as was feasible within project resources, to debate and reach agreement on main tasks. Working with given headings drawn from the existing CeVe competences[1], each group reached agreement about the main

[1] There had been debate within the Advisory Committee about whether the use of the CeVe headings would constrain participants' thinking, and this approach was agreed to be the only one that was feasible in the time available. The research team felt justified using the headings because, as people had been working to them since 1995, they would be a reasonable reflection of work as it was. The decision was vindicated when expert group participants expressed the strong hope that no completely new set of headings would be imposed on them.

tasks undertaken in the work. It is important to note that this method of pursuing consensus inevitably yielded tasks that were common to all participants, and therefore generic in nature across community education work at basic level. When each consensus activity was finished, time was given to plenary discussion.

The tasks identified were validated by returns from 40 other community education workers and a very small number of people working in other fields. Basic information about the numbers involved in these exercises is given in Chapter 1, and a full methodology of the expert group method in Appendix 3.

The map that follows includes only those tasks which were validated by a majority of other community education workers. The majorities were usually very large.

3.4.2 The Main Tasks

Engaging with the community

1. Get to know, and get known within, the community
2. Identify needs, being sensitive to issues
3. Identify existing networks
4. Establish and maintain agency links and partnerships
5. Develop strategies to identify and attract socially excluded groups
6. Use targeted outreach
7. Take or handle specialist roles as needed. (eg core skills tuition)
8. Support the voluntary sector
9. Supply information and signposting in and for the community
10. In all this, be pro-active and keep sustainability in mind.

Developing learning and educational opportunities

1. Audit current provision
2. Assess needs
3. Identify goals and plan intervention, basing training programmes on needs and balancing plans and strategies with those needs
4. Ensure that training programmes are flexible and informal and, where appropriate, developed in partnership with other providers
5. In general ensure a holistic approach through negotiation and partnership, having identified individuals/ groups/ partnerships at different levels of community activity. Create a shared vision
6. Build on existing learning experiences and define the many types of learning opportunities there are, especially in relation to lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship. Seize and use learning opportunities as they come and signpost individuals and groups to opportunities for further learning
7. Working to increase community capacity, encourage the transfer of responsibility to individuals

8. Offer guidance
9. Prioritise resources and secure them as necessary
10. Recognise throughout the breadth of contexts in which community education operates.

Empowering individuals and groups within the community

1. Identify realistic opportunities to foster confidence and self-esteem, structuring such opportunities as necessary – then use them
2. Recognise existing skills and knowledge, and where possible use them for the development of others
3. Negotiate learning programmes with young people and adults
4. Empower learners through different types of support, training and 'brokerage'. Ensure that any risks are measured, provide information opportunities to raise awareness, and give ongoing guidance and support
5. Work with individuals and groups to identify and tackle issues. Help people understand how power works, and how to challenge and change attitudes
6. Stimulate informed and critical thinking and help community education workers to be reflective practitioners
7. Enable individual and group involvement in community capacity-building through common action and volunteering, and sustain that empowerment through supporting community/ voluntary organisations
8. Throughout, link opportunity to need.

Organising and managing resources

1. Prioritise tasks and make use of time management skills
2. Ensure that all management (including that of service-level agreements) is needs-led
3. Manage staff, both paid and voluntary
4. Manage other resources
5. Train others to supervise, to use resources and make facilities available to others, and ensure that learning programmes as necessary are available
6. Ensure that groups know when legislation is relevant, when it may apply and when it must apply
7. Manage funding. Maintain a general overview of funding sources and systems and be creative in identifying further resources, funding and partnership opportunities. Be imaginative but realistic about these
8. Maintain clarity and realism in planning, organising and co-ordinating community events
9. Maintain accurate records
10. Prepare reports.

Practising community education within different settings

1. Know the current principles and values within each setting
2. Establish a clear understanding of purpose
3. Foster creativity by maintaining a wide vision
4. Keep skills flexible and transferable
5. Enable individuals to engage in learning by identifying opportunities for it in a variety of contexts, and by being proactive in developing settings and methods for learning
6. Take a collaborative approach to working: break down barriers between organisations and sectors, practise multi-agency working and work within an inter-professional framework
7. Work with a range of communities (with differences of geography, interest, age, gender, race)
8. Work across a range of issues
9. Develop a coherent strategy to meet community needs and interests, using innovative approaches to take account of them.

Using evaluative practice to assess and implement change

1. Establish a methodology which takes account of the starting position and the goals. Involve young people and adults using participatory methods. Ensure the availability of skills to analyse the information gathered and make use of evaluation tools such as LEAP
2. Ensure that equality and access issues are included in monitoring
3. Relate monitoring activities to funder requirements and to Community Learning Plans and Strategies
4. Take account of reviews, HMI feedback and reports
5. Adopt time management, ensuring that time is set aside for planning and for self-appraisal. Maintain a balance between action and reflection
6. Develop an understanding of the barriers to change
7. Give support through positive affirmation
8. Use standard and accessible language to benchmark best value.

Other headings

If they felt that the CeVe headings did not cover all the tasks they wanted to identify, expert group participants were asked to create new headings of their own. There were five of these, with associated tasks as shown below.

New heading	*Associated tasks*
Developing the profession	Assess undergraduate training/ supervise students on placement
Evaluating achievement	Demonstrate tangible outcomes of participants' engagement with community education
Working in partnership	Enable young people to convey their views directly to others
	Represent the views of others to other community groups, and vice versa
Promoting economic regeneration	Be aware that the social economy creates work
	Develop community projects which have an economic impact
Working with people/ networking	Use appropriate interpersonal and group skills and techniques (including conflict resolution skills)

Arguably, many if not all these headings could be subsumed under the previous six, but the majority of validators in each case thought they should be retained separately. Hence supervising placement students, working with evaluation as summative assessment, acting as mediator for others' views, focusing on job creation and the use of conflict resolution skills all add to the map of functions.

As stated earlier in this chapter, these tasks are broad, and generic to many professions. This is not only an outcome of the method used to identify them but also a reflection of the nature of much of the community education approach. A strong theme in the plenary discussions held after the consensus-reaching work at the expert group meetings was that a unique aspect of community education work was its breadth and the range of what one participant referred to as 'these amazing settings' for the work. In his view,

> *Sometimes we're educating, helping people learning, to reflect on their lives and maybe make changes for themselves, which is part of the empowerment. And sometimes we're deliberately intervening in a way which totally transforms the person's perspective on society and the community and their neighbourhood, and therefore themselves. And then they take quite different actions as a result of that.*
>
> (Expert group discussant)

In all this, community education workers engaged with people in both rural and urban areas and 'also with different age groups, with people from a lot of different social backgrounds ... all the excluded groups of travelling people, prostitutes'.

On the other hand, the expert group discussants were also keen to stress that there was a need to be more specific than previously about what community education workers did. This was related to a concern that many other professionals looked at the work done by community educators and considered themselves to be doing 'all of that'. But the way that community educators worked was thought to be very different. As one participant expressed it,

> *The rhetoric of community education is now being used in many, many other places, and when one talks to someone in FE doing an outreach job, or to someone in adult guidance, or to someone who's a lifelong learning officer* [for example] ... *they're talking in terms of everything I know. But when you actually see the way the intervention is done, you'll see that they trample on and squash and sometimes damage the infrastructure of the community – which we would fundamentally not do.*
>
> (Expert group discussant)

To some extent the breadth of the work and the need to be specific about tasks sit uneasily with one another. It may be easier to be specific about community education work in the voluntary sector, where agencies and projects have their own foci which are not necessarily educational.

3.5 Similarities and differences between SCVO skills and expert group tasks

In the task lists derived from expert group discussion given earlier the SCRE team tried to preserve the flavour of the originals, in which tasks were often expressed in combination with purposes and ways of working. Perhaps this stems from the strong educational focus stressed by many participants. In composing the expert groups the SCRE team sought wide representation across groups concerned with community education. Many of these are different voices within the public sector, and although representatives were invited and attended from the voluntary sector there is no doubt that they were in the minority; it is possible that groups composed of voluntary sector representatives would have produced a different mapping.

The voluntary sector may have a more task-oriented way of regarding its work that makes it easier to separate task or skill from purpose. Recently the SCVO undertook a skills analysis (SCVO, 1999) involving 353 organisations covering a wide range of work (not all related to community education), and responses from 993 paid staff and 335 volunteers. Respondents were asked to rank given skills (expressed as tasks) for frequency of use. A comparison of these skills/tasks with those identified by the expert groups shows both similarities and differences.

There are some similarities beneath the broad headings. For example, the SCVO's specific tasks of 'Working directly with client groups' 'Working with other organisations' and 'Advice', grouped under the broad heading of 'Providing Services', have some correlation with the expert groups' 'Empowering individuals and groups within the community' which included 'Work with individuals and groups to identify and tackle issues'. The idea of advice runs through the expert groups' tasks such as 'Empower learners through different types of support, training and brokerage ... provide information opportunities to raise awareness and give ongoing guidance and support'. .Whether these include the idea of advocacy is not clear.

The approaches underpinning the two lists are, however, different. This is clearly shown in the specificity of the skills or tasks. For example, while the SCVO list focuses on what is done in the course of providing services, the

expert group tasks emphasise the 'how' of helping people in the community find or create services for themselves. The concepts of educating and enabling run through the expert group tasks so that, as was noted above, the tasks are often inseparable from purposes and ways of working.

It is also interesting that three of the SCVO broad skill areas include tasks which are not strongly reflected either in the CeVe headings or in the expert group lists. These are Administration, Publicity, and Information Technology. Some of the tasks under these headings are implied but not specified in the expert group lists. It is hard to imagine how agency links and partnerships, for example, can be established and maintained without some administrative work. This may reflect a higher level, or an assumed level, of clerical support in local authorities which voluntary organisations may not have.

How much these differences matter depends on the use to which the task lists deriving from the expert groups will be put. It seems clear that participants at the expert groups saw their work in terms of the 'approach' that 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a) stated it to be.

3.6 Summary and comment

3.6.1 Summary

People who used community education emphasised the importance of 'working with people' tasks such as motivating others and building their confidence, and handling conflict and stress. They also valued the liaison work undertaken by community education workers, the events they organised and the fact that they facilitated a whole range of things. Community education workers gave information and advice and their ability to structure training was appreciated.

Most employers in all groups confirmed that tasks relating to the six CeVe competences were often undertaken, with those connected to engaging with the community and organising and managing resources being especially frequent. Expert group members from a wide range of settings and levels identified tasks under each of the CeVe headings. These were confirmed as central to community education work by most of the 40 community education workers who validated them. Five new headings, 'Developing the Profession', 'Evaluating Achievement', 'Working in Partnership', 'Promoting Economic Regeneration' and 'Working with People' were thought to be needed.

Some expert group members felt that community education needed to be more specific about what its work entailed in order to distinguish that work from some of the activities conducted by people in other professions. This point was perhaps related to the way that many of the tasks included on the experts' lists were expressed in terms of purpose and way of working.

At a broad level, in the voluntary sector the SCVO workforce survey's list of tasks shows some similarity with the lists built up by the expert groups. At the level of more detail, however, the SCVO list was more likely to specify 'what' was done while the experts' list tended to include the 'how'. It is notable that

the SCVO list includes Administration, Publicity and Information Technology as clear headings, which are less prominent in the expert group list.

3.6.2 Comment

The tasks identified by the expert groups were ones which all group members subscribed to; they may therefore be considered 'core' in the sense that they lie at the heart of what community education work is.

While it could be argued that community education workers are alone in carrying them out in combination, these are also tasks undertaken in other professions, so are not exclusive to community education. Recognising this, at the same time the expert group members stressed how different the community education approach to those tasks was when compared to other professions' approaches. There is a major tension here, however, associated with the extent to which those working in community education need to distinguish their work from that of other professionals in order to maintain their professional identity, and the fact that the lines between different professional areas are increasingly becoming blurred (*cf.* Becher, 1994; Barnett *et al*, 1987). At this level, few of the tasks identified in the expert group lists are likely to be undertaken solely by community education workers.

There are grounds, however, for supposing that the work undertaken by local authority-based community education workers is different from that undertaken by those in the voluntary sector, and that a blurring of professional edges is less important to the latter. While local authority work is broad-based and requires a generic approach, voluntary organisations focus on a specific interest: disability, for example, or child protection. Voluntary organisations, therefore, need people able to carry out specific tasks related to their foci. At the same time, because many voluntary organisations and branches are small, they may also have greater need of people who can turn their hands to anything. Administrative, clerical and overall managerial tasks must often be carried out by the same people who do everything else, as well as manage themselves.

Having undertaken no functional analyses of the work done in other professions, the current Review is unable to draw comparisons between one profession and another. If community education is different, however, the evidence presented so far suggests that the difference lies in a comprehensive, informal, and facilitative way of working, driven dominantly by what people and groups in the community want. PAULO is currently conducting a functional analysis of community education work across the UK, as part of the broad work of mapping occupational standards. It seems likely that when it is complete this work will add valuable insight and further information.

Up to this point we have concentrated on tasks. Skills and knowledge are needed to carry them out, however, while the nature of community education work reflected in many of the comments quoted above hints at the need for particular attitudes in its workers. The next chapter concentrates on data relating to what skills, knowledge and attitudes a community education worker needs to carry out the tasks identified here.

4: Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes

4.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out the information gathered in the course of this Review addressing the question of what skills, knowledge and attitudes community education workers need to do their work well. The 'map' of functions derived from discussion at the three expert group meetings makes it clear that most of these are complex and assume underlying skills and knowledge. These often overlap, and keeping them separate involves some over-simplification which we acknowledge. However, we feel that provided the overlap is not forgotten the three categories give a useful basis for analysis.

This chapter draws on four data sources. It begins by giving an overview of one of the expert group's opinions about skills, knowledge and attitudes, expressed in discussion after the group had identified the main tasks. From this starting point, we turn specifically to skills. First drawing on focus group data to summarise what users of community education wanted, we move next to the views of the thirteen key stakeholders and finally to the opinions offered by the wider employer sample through a questionnaire. This pattern is repeated for knowledge and then for attitudes.

4.2 An overview of the skills, knowledge and attitudes needed

Plenary discussion at the first of the expert group meetings gives a good starting point. Participants were asked what skills, knowledge and attitudes they thought were needed for the tasks they had spent all the morning in teasing out. During the discussion, three diagrams were drawn up to represent their thinking. These are shown below as Figures 4.1–4.3.

Figure 4.1: Skills

Figure 4.2 Knowledge

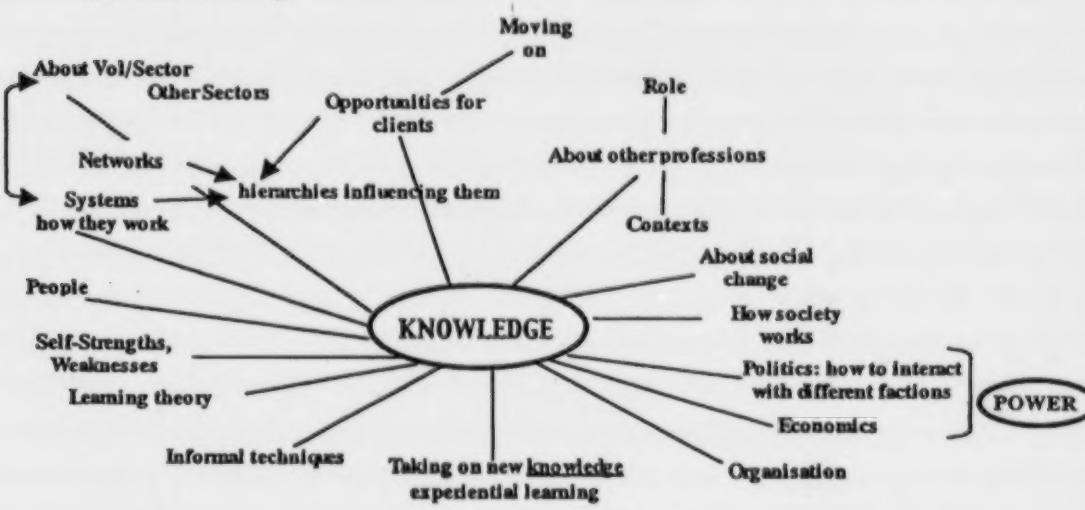
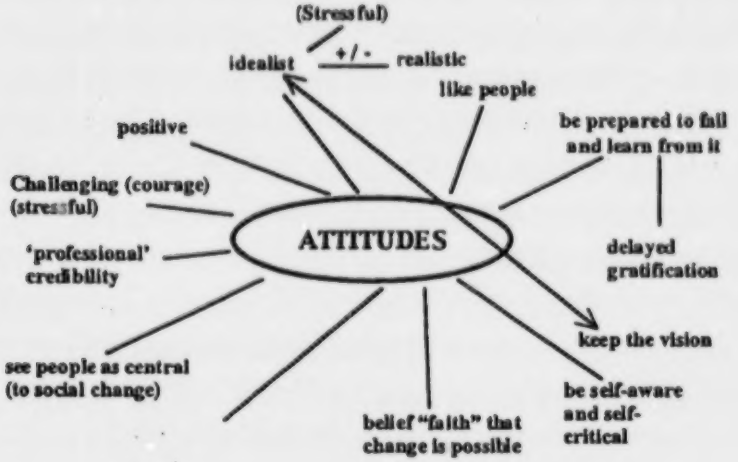


Figure 4.3: Attitudes



These provide an interesting overview, but more detailed information comes from the focus groups of community education users, to which we now turn in respect of skills.

4.3 Skills

4.3.1 The skills that community education users wanted

Users in all the groups said they valued their community education workers' organisational skills, and offered examples of activities the workers had started off. These included helping a youth group to get a skateboarding facility going, which the group then ran themselves, running a homework club, organising a crèche. Having got something off the ground, it was seen as important that a

community education worker could then stand back and let the users run it. 'We [the users] decide what we want and [the community educational worker] organises it so that we can take it forward' was one opinion which seems to have been widely shared. Efforts to organise outings and events such as a youth leadership course were also appreciated, as were the ability to encourage and motivate people.

In relation to all these, participants pointed out that they thought it important that a community education worker knew how to identify local needs, and how to deal with the insecurity coming from uncertain funding.

4.3.2 Information from key stakeholders

Several stakeholders were keen to point out that above all the work required practical skills. Beyond this, many commented on the value of those that were transferable. Having a combination of such skills added up to a whole that comprised a community education way of working, which could be applied in many situations. As the health board representative expressed it, what was important to his department was

> *something about the whole picture, the individual. It's not that they* [community education workers] *have a specialist youth background* [for example], *though that would be useful, but it's in terms of: are they community development oriented? Have they real experience?*
>
> (Health Board representative)

He did not believe that people with narrow topic or management-based backgrounds would understand the processes that made health promotion work.

There was general agreement among the thirteen that one of the most important of these transferable skills had to do with working with people. In particular, stakeholders identified the skill of handling group work successfully, by which was meant understand group processes and be able to manage the groups in such a way as to get the most out of them. Much of this work had to be done out in the community, where a community education worker would be engaging not only with groups but with individuals; so people also had to be able to 'walk the streets' and talk to people.

One to one outreach work was of particular importance to a civil service representative, whose interest was in lifelong learning. He explained that

> *Given that SUfI* (Scottish University for Industry) *has two particular aims, one of which is to boost employability and competitiveness and the other of which is to encourage social inclusion, and given that SUfI as a national organisation without a distributive network cannot get at specific people in social inclusion areas other than* [through] *campaigns ... then, in theory at least, people working in community education on the ground in social inclusion areas are foot-soldiers who could be spreading that kind of message across.*
>
> (Senior civil servant)

Good communication skills, therefore, were vital. Special mention was made of listening and counselling, the ability to negotiate and the ability to give constructive criticism. For one representative of a national organisation, the

possession of sophisticated skills in this area was what distinguished community educators from other professionals.

> *They* [community education workers] *need social psychology - the whole stuff on how groups work ... and I'm coming more and more to the belief that the thing that makes a community educator different is that they need to understand emotional intelligence. That's one of the big things that makes a difference in complex societies. So they need to understand about what that entails about how you control yourself, how you work with others ... because much of our work now is working with young people and adults who do not have, who have never had, the chance to hone up that kind of intelligence.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

Representatives of the voluntary sector and national organisations alike also stressed the need for people with transferable, generic abilities in organisation and management. In particular, they mentioned self-management and the abilities to motivate others, handle multiple priorities, set targets, handle budgets and plan ahead. One voluntary organisation representative said these were particularly hard to find when recruiting new staff, and pointed out their especial importance to small organisations where, arguably, management skills were all the more necessary.

It was clearly believed important that community education workers should have research and evaluation skills; these were stressed by representatives from a local authority, national and voluntary organisations and a health board. They were needed to conduct sound needs analyses, identify commonalities and gaps while searching for ways of bridging the latter, and to inform policy. The health board representative explained why research was important in his department.

> *In this department we have to understand research. We have to produce evidence-based practice because that's what health promotion is about. And therefore we have to be able to assimilate that and understand research, commission research or do it* [ourselves] *and make sense of it, and then produce strategies and policies.*
>
> (Health Board representative)

The representative of a national organisation stressed the need for education skills to stem from a clear educational rationale. Being a community education worker was about more than being a resource; underpinning the work there had to be

> *a passion and a skills base that says "We are educators with a set of skills that will move people and communities on..." And they are very basic skills – understanding how people learn, understanding how people work together and react together, and then doing something about that.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

At a very specific level, the importance of education skills was echoed by a voluntary sector stakeholder who emphasised the highly specific teaching-related skills of designing curricula, running sessions, developing learning strategies and supporting vulnerable students. The specific ability to train others was of central importance to the representative of a national organisation particularly interested in expanding its IT skills.

In general, it was stakeholders from the voluntary sector who emphasised the importance of specific skills: one commented that although she would like to see more people with counselling and interpersonal teamwork skills generally, specific skills too interested voluntary organisations. Fund-raising and IT skills warranted particular mention, though it was believed these were of growing importance to community education wherever it operated.

> *One of the key gaps* [in graduates coming out of training] *is their understanding of funding, fund-raising, and I don't think that is voluntary sector specific any more. It won't be for the future. Everybody needs to have a knowledge of the whole funding field ... Most of our development posts here and in other organisations are looking for a fairly high level of knowledge of IT: the use of project planning tools, the use of Powerpoint ... as well as Word and so on. People are having to be well rounded.*
>
> (Voluntary organisation representative)

As implied above, the interest in ICT and fund raising skills was shared by national organisations beyond the voluntary sector.

It must be noted that a stakeholder representing a voluntary organisation quarrelled with the notion that there might be any such things as community education skills, or indeed that it could be possible to define a set of characteristics for a community educator or community education worker. This was linked partly to the highly practical nature of the work but also to the breadth of need in the voluntary sector.

> *It's not a theoretical thing at all, it's a kind of practical day-to-day thing about working in communities and the disadvantages that some communities face ... We deal with all kinds of people with all kinds of backgrounds with all kinds of qualifications, and* [have the need] *for all kinds of skills. And the sector will employ them in many, many different ways. And there is no one defined set of characteristics.*
>
> (Voluntary organisation representative)

4.3.3 Views of the wider employer sample

The importance of CeVe-related skills offered in a list on the questionnaire was confirmed by a wider sample of employers: all skills were either 'very' or 'quite' important. Well over half the employers from all employer groups thought it very important to have staff with the personal skills that led to successful group work, as well as the ability to work with individuals. They similarly valued the skill of being able to give constructive criticism, and thought it very important to have staff with good communication skills, both written and oral, as well as staff who would be able to work independently and make assessments of their own output.

A more open question allowing respondents to add further important skills extends the list. Respondents in the voluntary sector further emphasised management skills of various kinds, business acumen and the importance of taking a professional approach, in addition to skills in the specialist areas of counselling, conflict management and understanding young people and their interests.

Public sector respondents added advocacy, problem-solving, the ability to prioritise demands, see the broader picture through political and strategic awareness, work across projects and with different organisations, facilitate and negotiate, raise funds and develop learning materials, all of which are transferable skills, but the more specialised skills needed to support young people were also mentioned. The view that multi-agency working and the ability to prioritise and work to deadlines were important was shared by further education colleges and community schools as well as respondents in the voluntary sector.

Local authority employers, both the main community education providers and those in other departments, confirmed the value of most of these. They particularly valued arbitration skills, the ability to manage work through planning prioritising and the skills necessary for partnership working. Main providers especially noted the skills to facilitate learning and develop support strategies.

4.4 Knowledge

4.4.1 Knowledge that users expected of community education workers

The focus group participants placed considerable stress on a community education worker's 'know-how'. They wanted people who knew how to provide access to things like photocopying facilities and computers. They wanted them to know how to find their way round systems so that they could, for example, steer people through lottery grant applications, or point them in the right direction for specific information. In activities such as these users recognised the importance of a community education worker's having contact networks because they went to their community education workers for advice about a wide range of things which included information about routes into further and higher education, sex – and drugs – related issues and housing.

4.4.2 Information from key stakeholders

People from most groups wanted community education workers to have some level of political knowledge. At a broad and general level, many stakeholders emphasised the desirability of community education workers having an understanding of how the world worked globally, nationally and locally. They needed to know what power structures there were, how they related to each other and into what theoretical and historical contexts they fitted. At local level this was particularly relevant, because

> *To do the work, which is all about development, one needs to be aware of political and social perspectives of our current world, why they exist and the extent to which that allows you to consider them as challengeable, changeable, something you can work with and something you can use to be effective ... Because if you don't know that, then you can't get close enough to why people are in the circumstances in which they find themselves ... They haven't decided to be there.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

Part of this was knowing about government processes and how government worked. Again the local level was important as well as the national because, as a health board representative said, local government was 'the context you're working in' but at the same time it was 'useful to understand how the wider agendas are formulated'.

Related to this was knowledge of what current Government policies said and implied, and how they related to other policies. Most stakeholders thought this was vitally important, because policies had the power to change key priorities for both voluntary and public sectors. 'We're all looking at those agendas as though they are bread and butter,' commented a voluntary sector representative.

Workers should also know what current legislation was saying, especially in the areas of charity law and governance, which were important to anyone involved in fund-raising. Such information, according to a voluntary sector representative, was thin on the ground.

> *There's a lot of basic information that doesn't seem to be around for people in charity law, in governance ... There's just so much, it's such a sophisticated world ...* [that] *it does seem to me that anyone involved in community learning needs to have a good grasp of these conditions or know where to go to get them.*
>
> (Voluntary sector representative)

Outwith the political and legal arena, several stakeholders, especially one involved with issues of racial equality, pointed out how important it was for a community education worker to know what the needs and aspirations of a community were.

More generally, a strong local authority view was voiced that human and social psychology were important knowledge areas. One reason for this was that they underpinned an understanding of the skills involved in successful group work and learning. The representative of a national organisation pointed to another reason: that adults and young people had changing needs at different times of their lives, needs which helped determine the issues that were important to them. Community education workers had to understand this. Local authority representatives also identified a need for pedagogical and philosophical knowledge.

A health board representative expressed the opinion that community education workers might reasonably be expected to have a broad overview of several areas of specific employer interest – understand what a health board understood health to be, for example, and what factors were likely to affect health.

4.4.3 Views of the wider employer sample

Questionnaire respondents were given the opportunity to identify up to three areas of knowledge they would like their staff to have. Voluntary sector respondents wrote in many, often relating to the specific areas of youth work and youth interest, adult issues, disability, health, homelessness and alcohol. In addition they confirmed the importance of wider knowledge areas: political structures both national and local, government policies especially in relation to

social inclusion, a wide range of legislation, how to campaign and use the media, local knowledge which included understanding its economy as well as conservation environment issues, education systems and related issues, entrepreneurial activity including fund-raising, IT and how to manage people and time.

The list derived from main local authority providers of community education was very similar. In addition to the above it included knowledge of how to undertake research and evaluation, an understanding of the political process in relation to power, and issues relating to community education theory and practice, including the range and scope of voluntary sector work. As for the voluntary sector, knowledge of educational practice and pedagogy were important. In the case of other local authorities, very specific knowledge of different fields was required: of leisure, economic and housing development, social work, school systems, child development. Professional ethics were also considered important.

Further education, community school and other public sector respondents echoed similar issues, though perhaps with less diversity than the voluntary sector had specified. They too were concerned to have staff with knowledge of national and local politics, the local environment, education-related issues, enterprise and IT. FE and community school respondents additionally noted the importance of sound knowledge in special subject fields. A police force representative stressed the importance of life experience and an overall social awareness, and health boards, like the FE colleges and community school respondents, emphasised specialist knowledge.

4.5 Attitudes

4.5.1 What users wanted

Members of the focus groups of community education users were very clear about the kinds of people they thought community education workers ought to be. Above all, they had to be friendly and open –'young at heart' 'not stuffy' and 'up for a laugh'. Along with the humour, though, there had to be a serious side as people, especially the young ones, wanted 'someone you can trust', in whom they could confide without fear of betrayal. And all the groups valued reliability, commitment, fairness and an open-minded, non-judgemental attitude. How far does this tie in with the views held by the key stakeholder group?

4.5.2 Information from key stakeholders

A commitment to social justice and valuing diversity were attitudes that all stakeholders held to be of central importance.

Beyond this, community education workers were widely thought to need a genuine capacity to care about others, to listen, be sensitive to people in disadvantaged communities and be able to get close to them. However, a voluntary organisation representative commented that although it was often

assumed that people in community education would have these attitudes, it had 'certainly not' been his experience that all did.

> *One of the things that upset me most about the profession is people who are doing the job because it's a job, and doing it as a means to an end .... I don't think it's the sort of job that you can come into unless you have an inner belief in it.*
>
> (Voluntary organisation representative)

Another voluntary organisation representative emphasised how important it was that community education workers knew they had to get out from behind their desks and go into the community, getting to know it at first-hand. 'Knowing you've got to talk to people who live in that area and see what the issues are, rather than getting a consultant in to devise something from a textbook' was essential.

In the view of a national organisation representative, it was also essential to care about education and the value of learning.

Behind all this would need to lie a friendly and easy-going personality: local authority and voluntary sector representatives agreed that what was looked for was someone who was approachable, smiling and relaxed, with a positive attitude to themselves and others, as well as flexible because 'You've got to be used to working in draughty halls one minute and then talking to a Chief Executive of a major council in the other.' In addition, community education workers had to be open, willing to work with and learn from others and willing to embrace change.

At the same time, both voluntary and local authority representatives commented on the need for self-awareness and self-control, coupled with critical thinking and objectivity. They also pointed out that the willingness to embrace change would at times involve recognising the strength of external forces. A national organisation stakeholder intimated that it was no use thinking that past practice could be a guide to what was needed. '[If] you're in an area where the budget's tight, unless you can actually prove that you're doing any good within an accountable area, you're going to be out.'

4.5.3 Views of the wider employer sample

Asked to indicate how important it was for their community education workers to be committed to the values of equal opportunities, have respect for others, be flexible, committed to helping others achieve independently and able to take a broad view of things, high proportions of questionnaire respondents in all employer groups in our data set showed that they regarded these qualities as very important. Other important qualities suggested in responses to an open question confirmed the importance of those qualities identified by other groups.

4.6 Summary and comment

4.6.1 Summary

Expert group members identified a wide range of skills, knowledge and attitudes needed by community education workers.

In relation to skills, users of community education saw workers exercise skill both in organising and in knowing when to stand back; they recognised that community education workers used their skills to motivate and encourage other people. Key stakeholders varied in the extent to which they stressed particular skills, but all emphasised the importance of practicality. For some it was important that community education workers brought breadth of vision to different situations, drawing on skills they brought with them. It was thought very important that workers should have the skills to manage groups effectively and productively, and operate in outreach situations: for this a range of communication skills was needed which included listening and counselling, negotiation and giving constructive criticism. There was a view that the understanding of 'emotional intelligence' was a prerequisite for all this, to the extent that the ability to apply such understanding was a defining skill for people working in community education. Other skills thought important had to do with management at many levels as well as research and evaluation, skills in which were thought necessary to conduct needs analyses, make connections and inform policy. Community education workers were expected to have specific learning and teaching skills, but some stakeholders stressed that these had to be underpinned by a clear educational rationale. In general, stakeholders in the voluntary sector put greater emphasis on specific skills, especially fund-raising and IT, though others also thought these important. Employers from all the questionnaire respondent groups confirmed the importance of 'people skills'. They also stressed management, a wide range of specialist skills and the need to work across disciplines.

Where knowledge was concerned, users stressed the importance of community education workers as facilitators, and providers of information; but key stakeholders identified a far broader range of knowledge which they wanted such workers to possess. This range included political knowledge and understanding at global, national and local levels, up to date knowledge of relevant legislation and personal knowledge of the needs and aspirations of the community in which they worked. A strong view from local authority stakeholders was that those working in community education needed knowledge of human and social psychology, pedagogy and philosophy. Other stakeholders considered it desirable for community education workers to have an overview of several areas of specific employer interest. Through their questionnaire responses, voluntary sector employers identified knowledge of a very wide range of specialist areas as well as political and legislative understanding, in addition to most of the other knowledge areas listed above. They also thought community education workers needed to know about educational systems and how they worked, how to use the media in campaigning and how to take entrepreneurial action. Local authority employers identified similar knowledge areas as important, but especially evaluation and research and an understanding of the range and scope of work done in the voluntary sector. Local employers outwith the main provider departments stressed the need for specific knowledge relating to their fields, while in a similar way further education and health board

employers stressed specialist knowledge. A police force representative emphasised the value of experience culled from life.

In relation to attitudes, community education users made clear their desire for friendly, open individuals who would at the same time be discreet and trustworthy, reliable and fair. All key stakeholders agreed the need for community education workers to be friendly and approachable. They also stressed the importance of being fair through a commitment to social justice and diversity, and of valuing education and learning. Community education workers were thought to need a genuine capacity to care about others, coupled with a desire to make real contact. In addition, they had to be flexible, prepared to work in both formal and informal settings, and to have the capacity for self-awareness and self-control. An outlook realistic enough to recognise when change was inevitable would be an asset. The wider employer sample confirmed the importance of commitment to equal opportunities, respect for others, flexibility, helping others achieve independently and the ability to take a broad view.

4.6.2 Comment

The skills, knowledge and attitudes identified by the various informants to this Review as necessary for community education workers are awesome in their complexity and number. To some extent, attitudes will be determined by basic personality types and the training institutions' interview procedures will be important in this respect. Beyond this, the task facing training providers is daunting and it is to be questioned whether any training provider at pre-qualifying or qualifying level could cover everything.

These data suggest differences in what is required in the voluntary and local authority sectors, especially in the range of knowledge that community education workers need. Voluntary organisations in particular require familiarity with their often highly specific fields and their associated legislation. The latter is often very complex, can change frequently and is vitally important in its detail. Practical skills of various kinds (and necessarily the ability to apply them in a variety of contexts) are clearly important to everyone, however.

The implication in all these lists for the importance of continuing professional development for all those working in community education is very clear.

5: A Changing Workplace

5.1 Introduction

As was stated in Chapter 1, in recent years community education has been moving through a period of turbulence. A major factor in this was local authority reorganisation in 1996/7, which had consequences for both the public and voluntary sectors. Other factors driving change, however, were the COSLA review of community education 'Promoting Learning – Developing Communities' (COSLA, 1998) and the report 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a). For example, the former recognised shifting ground in the need to refocus roles to address changing Government agendas, acknowledging the 'prime importance of lifelong learning, social inclusion and active citizenship for community education'. It also commented on the enormous range of partnerships within which local authority community educators now worked. 'Communities: Change Through Learning' not only set out a new vision for community education, but also among its key recommendations were that local authorities should produce community learning plans and strategies, and that community education should give particular attention to working in partnership as well as cross-sectorally. Published several months later, Circular No. 4/99 (SOEID, 1999) followed up these recommendations by giving guidance to local authorities on future arrangements and setting out how the planning process should be developed.

These events might reasonably be expected to have induced change by mid-2000. The SCRE consultants were interested to know what these had been, how far change had been thought necessary, and what implications there were for Government policies and for training providers. Chapter 5 begins by outlining expert groups' views of the changed circumstances in which community education workers found themselves. It then draws on key stakeholders' views to address the need for and nature of changes, and gives particular attention to the three major foci of lifelong learning, community capacity building and active citizenship as well as to the notions of multi-disciplinary working and partnership. These stakeholders' perceptions are complemented by data from the questionnaires, which give some indication of employers' views about they changes they expected to see in the near future.

5.2 Expert group views of changes in community education

Expert group opinion confirmed the view that community education was changing, although it must be said that this was a particularly strong theme among those working in local authorities.

Much of the discussion focused on circumstance. There was a sense of anger at what participants reported as year-on-year cuts in direct funding for community education and a feeling that the many other arrangements that had come into being were unwelcome: authorities' funding had been reduced to the extent that 'in some authorities you're hard pressed to find a so-called community education service'. Authorities could no longer afford to buy

training from colleges, one result being that untrained people were 'thrown in' to do community education work and 'the whole thing [was] being devalued'. In contrast, people who were described as 'outsiders - well, insiders but nothing to do with working with people' were thought able to say 'This community needs a regeneration scheme' but were themselves unable to build relationships even with involved professionals, let alone with people in the community. In place of straightforward systems there were thought to be 'too many people, in charge of too much money, coming from different directions without a clarity of overview.'

While there was strong agreement that the community education world was changing rapidly, at the level of tasks expert group discussants found changes harder to pin down. There was recognition that community education workers were now expected to work with different professional groups, especially teachers, social workers, people connected with housing and health workers. Additionally, it was accepted that the current times required community education to produce 'hard evidence of soft outcomes' which was difficult to do if the essence of the work was to be retained; community education was about more than helping people into employment because it had to do with 'the quality of life of those people and communities, and individual self-esteem, and all the things that we would value.'

Beyond these things, however, discussants found it difficult to be specific. 'I just don't know that everybody is sure what people's jobs are really going to be,' said one. 'I think we have to become much tighter at being sure about what it is that's actually required.' Tighter job descriptions from employers, it was suggested, might help. The future was felt to be highly uncertain, to the extent that current priorities were not expected to remain stable. One person hinted at the temporary nature of political perspectives:

> *In some ways I see the job going backwards ... because for so long we weren't allowed to talk about things like social justice or community capacity building, and so we were talking about adult guidance ... That was a flavour of the eighties ... I'm now justifying a community worker being just that, somebody who is an absolute resource in the community who has a strong educational focus* ...[but] *I'm not sure that in five years' time I will be able to do it again, and that's the real difficulty. It's acceptable just now.*
>
> (Expert group discussant)

5.3 Reactions to 'Communities: Change Through Learning'

5.3.1 Was change needed?

There was general agreement among the key stakeholders that community education in the statutory sector had been in need of change. The strength of this agreement varied, however, from a belief that although some change might be beneficial it should involve nothing radical to the view that massive changes were implied and that the report did not go far enough.

Within the voluntary sector, feelings were strong that there were no 'first order' implications in 'Communities: Change Through Learning' for voluntary

organisations. The sector was reported to have been in constant change for many years and there was huge frustration that this had not been recognised. Voluntary organisations felt that they were already working in partnership with local authorities, providing services on their behalf; they had long been making applications to European and National Lottery funding sources to support lifelong learning. People were said to be already aligning themselves with the three Government agendas and comparing the work they did against them.

Opinions about the extent to which the statutory sector needed change were more varied, however. The belief that radical changes were not required aligned with the perspective taken by a national organisation that 'Communities: Change Through Learning' was a celebration of community education rather than a critique of it. The report's use of the term 'community learning' had caused people to wonder if the nature of the work they were doing was different; but this stakeholder saw the report as saying that community education was a good and very important approach, although possibly under-used:

> *It wasn't saying "We've looked at this approach and it actually doesn't do very much." What it's actually saying is, it's ... a critical way of addressing social issues, addressing a whole range of agendas ... So in that sense I think we've just got to say ... this is saying something very positive.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

This was not to say there was no room for change, however, because it was imperative to ensure that community education used the best possible practice. A different key stakeholder, also representing a national organisation, felt that it would be no bad thing for community education to take stock of itself as it was a long time since this had been done.

Among those who thought more radical changes necessary, one stakeholder, representing a national organisation, believed there was something fundamentally flawed in the notion that community education was a profession. Community educators should view themselves as cross-disciplinary change agents. His reason was that community education as a profession conditioned those working within it to think about people in communities as 'consumers of something you provide, rather than as people who generate their own vision of what needs to be done'. Community education ought to be driven by what communities needed, not by what suited resources. As if to illustrate his point, a stakeholder from the voluntary sector remembered a community being provided with a square and a fountain, when what it had really wanted was quite different.

The national organisation representative believed to counter the tendency to start with what was provided, local authorities needed to engage in much more radical changes than interpreting the Osler report 'over-liberally', as they were now doing in terms of best value reviews. That some authorities at least were making that radical shift was suggested by one local authority representative's

stressing the need for change at a level that was probably 'more than [community education] was up for.'

Why else was community education in the statutory sector thought to need change? A major reason was that, in the years leading up to publication of the report, community education was thought to have lost its identity. 'The quinquennial review, or whatever it was, was right. Community education had lost its way,' said one national organisation's representative. In his view this loss of identity was linked to unclear leadership from CLS (Community Learning Scotland). This, the Government's national community education agency, was remitted by Government in 1990 with responsibility for the professional endorsement of training, which function is carried out through its CeVe unit. Since 1998 the agency has also taken a lead role in establishing, and currently convenes, the NTO for the Community-based Learning and Development sector. In 1999 CLS was remitted to manage the National Community Learning Training Programme, a CPD support programme to assist partners engaged in Community Learning Planning. Nevertheless, a small number of information providers thought that CLS was out of touch with what was happening in training and to be "struggling to survive as an organisation, rather than developing community education".

The representative of a national organisation with an outside interest believed that community education was unfortunate to have been hit by changing circumstances. However, he thought it had to realise that the days when a group could control things and have ownership of them were long gone.

5.3.2 What kinds of changes were thought necessary?

One view, particularly strong from a local authority perspective but shared by a voluntary sector stakeholder, was that because community learning was mainly about community capacity building, practitioners able to lead it were required. At a more detailed level there was need for more community profiling and resources auditing.

A widely shared opinion across all groups was that community education must prioritise its work, and that its greatest priority should be social exclusion. As one stakeholder explained,

> *Community learning seems to me to be about saying, well, we do less of what we're doing. We prioritise for whatever reason, but ... the exclusion thing is the main label: exclusion and participation ... We ought to spend more time focusing on those who are preparing to fail, so that we can help them achieve or at least be in the game.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

Some expressed doubts, however, about whether existing structures could cope with this: some local authorities in particular were thought very rigid, and a local authority representative was not certain that people in his area would allow community education not to offer the services it had been used to do.

A further widely held view was that thinking in relation to community learning investment was somewhat old-fashioned and needed to be put into a national

perspective. People should think more strategically, looking at the bigger picture. Those working in community education had the capacity to be catalysts for change, which meant their potential contribution was strong:

> *The kind of vision for community education that I would have would be as an organisation which could easily link in* [to other organisations] *and that can contribute to all these other agendas.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

Part of being part of the bigger picture would involve awareness of how the media worked and could be used. Some stakeholders emphasised the need for community education to make its impact at policy level, on the decision-makers.

In this strategic approach, a dovetailing of related services was desirable. This had implications for partnership working, and pointed to the need for a general breaking out of professional boundaries so that skills and knowledge could be shared. One stakeholder representing a national organisation believed this was already happening, as community education managers worked increasingly and with success in inter-disciplinary teams, and were drawn from a variety of backgrounds. However, the view proffered by a health board and a national organisation representative was that community education must become less precious about itself as a profession. Seeing themselves as part of a bigger picture might help those who worked in community education to value themselves more.

Some changes were clearly felt to be necessary with regard to what community education should be called. Different terms, but in particular 'community education' 'Community Education' 'community learning' and 'Community Learning' were in current use and this was causing confusion. One national organisation representative blamed the report 'Communities: Change Through Learning' for much of this. Its outcomes had been 'sound enough' but

> *They had to sugar-coat it with unfathomable concepts such as Community Learning and other things, which were phrases we could have used anyway and some were, but all of a sudden they became capital C and capital L, and became something else ... and now we're hung, drawn and quartered by these terms ... It's a bloody nuisance.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

A different organisation representative commented that the debate over 'community education' versus 'community learning' had never been intended by the Osler report. However, he conceded that maybe the word 'education' conjured up too academic an image and needed some re-thinking. More forcefully, stakeholders from a local authority and a health board were clear that 'community education' had 'had its day'. In any case, if community education was process driven, did it really matter what it was called?

For a voluntary organisation representative, however, what the approach was called mattered very much. In his view the term 'community education' had been deeply divisive and had reinforced a 'them and us' perspective between

the voluntary and statutory sectors. By contrast, 'community learning' was a cross-sectoral term with great potential to draw people together.

It is worth noting that during one of the expert group meetings discussants had been deeply divided on this issue.

Thinking more widely, a senior civil service interviewee expressed his view that 'the jargon' of community education 'had to go', as it did community education no good in the eyes of those outwith the profession. In his opinion community education would serve itself better by becoming more target-driven, able to produce evidence of outcomes to make its case for funding to local authorities and other funding sources. No more than ten indicators of achievement would be needed as it was 'a fairly simplistic kind of measurement that's required.'

A national organisation representative strongly disagreed, however. His view was that working with people and their happiness did not lend itself to measurement, although 'people outside' did not want to hear that. He felt that community educators had to gather the confidence to say that their job wasn't about numbers or measurement. A related point was that outputs were related to inputs – and that community education had lacked the latter for a long time:

> *If you want to properly measure development, or failure, then you have to measure that against some kind of input. And if you don't input, why should you expect some kind of output?*
>
> (National organisation representative)

5.3.3 Implications for social inclusion, active citizenship and lifelong learning

Asked whether they thought changes such as those summarised above would further implementation of these three policies, most stakeholders thought that they had the power to do this, provided the changes were real. Why? Because the three policy agendas gave community education work the clear focus it had hitherto lacked:

> *The problem has been that people coming out of community education have not seen that* [the three policies are] *the goal of their work, and that they should measure their performance by the degree to which it leads to social inclusion for individuals who've been excluded, social inclusion for communities who've been excluded* [and] *active involvement and participation in democracy for individuals and communities.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

As suggested above, social inclusion was considered the most important of the three policies, as it drove everything. This agenda had particular implications for partnership working between both voluntary and statutory sectors as well as between departments within individual organisations.

The active citizenship agenda required critical analysis of what the policy asked as well as understanding of related economic, social and environmental issues. Community education had the potential to be a powerful force for excluded groups and should therefore take a strategic role in advancing all these policies.

With respect to lifelong learning, besides the ability of community education workers to act as 'foot soldiers' for SUfl as noted in Chapter 4, community education was felt to have a part to play in pointing people in the direction of projects like '2nd Chance to Learn'. This had implications for partnership working.

5.3.4 Stakeholder comments on multi-disciplinary and partnership working

Many of the ideas outlined above hint at the importance of multi-disciplinary and partnership working. Were these generally thought desirable? How easy were they thought to be, and what, specifically, was thought necessary to advance them?

Enthusiasm for multi-disciplinary and partnership working varied amongst the key stakeholders. The strongest view was pragmatic: that such ways of working were here to stay and by some means had to be made to work. For a long time it had been 'glaringly obvious' that they were needed; work had to be client - centred and needs-led and, because the world was not arranged according to self-contained professional paradigms, multi-disciplinary and partnership working had to be accepted.

This did not mean they were always to be welcomed, however. A voluntary sector view was that 'not all of the world is a partnership with local government ... and we're the better for that approach.'

Desirable or not, the verdict of all key stakeholders was that neither multi-disciplinary nor partnership working was easy. The problems envisaged were immense and much effort would be required to make either work.

Across all groups, stakeholders were adamant that neither multi-disciplinary nor partnership working would 'just happen'. Time, effort and resources would have to be invested in them. People had to learn how to share and network; the skills involved in learning had to applied to these situations as much as any others where learning was needed.

At the heart of the process lay the need to understand each others' positions, not only across the voluntary sector/local authority divide but across different interests and professional fields as well. A voluntary sector organisation representative clearly felt very frustrated by the scanty nature of local authority knowledge about voluntary organisations and how they worked:

> *Now we're all required to work together it's come to the surface that local authority people engaged in community learning/education don't, by and large, know how the voluntary sector works, what kinds of organisations there are, who are involved in community learning or the areas they're working in.*
>
> (Voluntary organisation representative)

She could identify 'pockets of good co-operation' between local authorities and voluntary organisations who had aligned themselves with local authority service plans, but thought the numbers of voluntary organisations who were not so aligning themselves were ten times greater. A different voluntary organisation view was critical of his own sector, however:

> *Even within this new agenda the voluntary sector doesn't see itself as part of that, and is not seen as part of that ... The voluntary sector is normally very precious about the fact that it does work, has innovative ideas and the local authority sector don't have any of that, they just poach it, which is a load of nonsense.*
>
> (Voluntary organisation representative)

This stakeholder also thought it was necessary to bring understanding of each other's work to different interest groups within the voluntary sector, but was optimistic, believing there was 'a place for everyone within it all' and that community learning had the potential to pull together some of the commonality across the sector 'if it played its cards right'.

Understanding was also needed between different professions. A national organisation representative expressed bewilderment at the way social workers operated:

> *I do not understand their theoretical base at all. I can see bits of social science* [and] *they're fine in crisis, but once the crisis is over they don't know what they're going to do ... because they've got no theoretical base from which to work ... It's all about "We'll fix it" rather than taking a cool look at what the needs are.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

An important factor in furthering understanding would be improving communications. A practical example offered was giving longer notice of meetings: two weeks were not enough. At a deeper level, a local authority representative with a particular interest in equality commented that minority groups should be involved from the beginning in community learning plans. He made the further point that understanding was only the first step; partners would have to go beyond understanding to value the positions of others.

A further aspect of improving understanding was that professions had to broaden their horizons. This was widely seen as important by stakeholders from all the groups. Professional boundaries had to be broached and all the groups who needed to work together had to let go of their self-interests. For community education workers, a national organisation representative commented, this meant they would have to realise that although they might exercise their skills well, those skills were not exclusive: much of their work had been done by others for a long time. Health education and health promotion agencies were a good example of this: they employed many of the same techniques and focused on the same issues. According to a few stakeholders, however, attitudes among community education workers were not the only barriers: teachers were narrower still in outlook. 'Working with other professions is something school teachers find extraordinarily difficult,' one observed.

Several stakeholders emphasised that lack of trust was a huge barrier to partnership and multi-disciplinary working, and that often such mistrust was based on a reluctance to share power and to share funds. Having an understanding of others' positions would undoubtedly help but other factors were operating as well; one national organisation representative pointed out that

not only was it human nature to put oneself and one's interests first, but current structures militated against any other way of proceeding:

> *The structures firstly and mainly ask you to fight your own corner ... Once you've got your own back yard OK you can go out and be full of largesse with others – but if you're still struggling* [you'll say] *bugger off, I'm too busy ... That's human reaction ... And if you work across departments in councils, Planning will do nothing until they've got Planning sorted out.*
> (National organisation representative)

Clearly, the demands of making collaboration work were thought complex and, when managers were poor as the stakeholder quoted above thought they often were, the situation was not helped.

To break through such barriers called for the input of effort and resources, plus time for research, development and evaluation. And crucially it demanded a realistic assessment of what the implications of this input would be for community education. One stakeholder, working in a national organisation, wondered whether it was realised that if community education put the necessary effort into partnership and multi-disciplinary working, it might have to withdraw from providing other services. Prioritisation, again, was important.

5.4 Employers' views of coming change

Through the medium of the questionnaire, employers were asked if they felt the nature of the work undertaken in their organisations or departments was likely to change in the next three years. Over half the respondents from all employer groups expected that it would, but while this expectation held for just over half the employers in the voluntary sector group, almost all the local authority respondents believed the next three years would bring changes. Those who anticipated change were asked to note down what they expected to happen.

The scenario drawn from voluntary sector and local authority respondents alike suggests the possibility that organisations would change the way they delivered their services, becoming more responsive to the changing needs of customers. More direct, face to face work would be required but there would also be a need to take account of developments in information and computer technology. This was likely to mean more computer-based and on-line work. More specific skills would be required, but at the same time, there would be an increased need for basic skills. More outreach and community-based work was predicted, some of which would be libraries-based. In general, more flexible and student-centred learning was expected. Further, organisations themselves were expected to continue changing in various ways, some expanding while others faced a reduction in demand. Part of this could be traced to changes in circumstances and/or the existence of structures like Community Learning Plans. More moves towards partnership were expected as well as an increasing emphasis on the social inclusion agenda.

Sharing all these views, local authority respondents particularly stressed the need to become more client centred, to focus more sharply on excluded groups

and on community development through capacity-building, and to put more emphasis on partnership and multi-disciplinary working.

Out of the expectations of change outlined in this chapter it would be possible to infer a list of training needs. However, we have more direct evidence for this, and it is to that evidence that we come in the next chapter.

5.5 Summary and comment

5.5.1 Summary

Expert group members painted a picture of a changing and somewhat despondent profession. Group members from local authorities in particular saw their work as having been under-resourced for many years and currently as devalued. In general, there was uncertainty about the future, but agreement that more collaborative and multi-disciplinary working would be required. There was also agreement that in future there would be increased emphasis on accountability and performance measured against indicators.

While voluntary organisation representatives tended to believe the report 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a) had few implications for the voluntary sector, which had been changing for many years, key stakeholders agreed that community education in the statutory sector needed to change, largely because it had lost its sense of identity and direction.

While some thought the scale of change needed was relatively slight, others saw it as massive. Relatively small changes would include dropping the 'jargon' of community education and a re-visiting of terminology to clarify the use of 'community education' and 'community learning', although for some people even this was a major issue.

Among the deeper changes, some thought a real questioning of the status of community education as a profession and a service was necessary: community education practitioners should view themselves as change agents working across professions rather than as belonging to a profession separate in itself.

A few stakeholders identified a need for practitioners able to lead change in the cause of community capacity-building, and make more use of community profiling and resources auditing. Many stakeholders agreed that community education should prioritise by focusing on social inclusion, but while agreeing, others stakeholders doubted that this would be possible. Many people stressed how necessary it was for community education practitioners to think more strategically if they were going to influence change at the important level of decision-making and policy. A dovetailing of related services was foreseen, which had profound implications for partnership working: major barriers to this were related to professional defensiveness. Opinions were divided on the value of measuring outcomes in community education work, some people feeling very strongly that it would be pointless to do this, although there was some acceptance that it would be necessary.

Most key stakeholders believed that the report 'Communities: Change Through Learning' had given community education a clear focus and that, provided changes within community education were real, community education was well placed to address the three Government policies of social inclusion, active citizenship and lifelong learning. With respect to collaborative, multi-disciplinary working, enthusiasm among key stakeholders was varied, though recognition that they were a fact of life was general. Key stakeholders also agreed, however, that working in this way was very difficult. Main stumbling blocks included the need for resources and time – time to learn how to work together, because collaboration did not just happen, and very importantly, time to understand all partners' standpoints. Communication at all levels would have to improve; people would have to learn how to step beyond their professional boundaries, and how to trust one another even to the extent of sharing funds. Stakeholders in both the voluntary sector and the local authorities thought this was thought especially hard to do; in local authorities, structures were not always set up to facilitate sharing or working together, and often managers did not know how to go about it.

Most employers in the questionnaire sample, but especially those in local authorities, expected changes in the next three years. Employers in all groups thought that organisations would become more responsive to customers' needs, making greater use of face to face work, use information technology more widely and having increasing need of both specific and basic skills. Work was thought likely to move out into the community and into other services such as libraries; more flexible modes of learning would be required. Changes in relation to Community Learning Plans and Strategies were foreseen, as were moves towards more partnership working.

5.5.2 Comment

The evidence of this chapter points to several deep divisions within community education, divisions which may be irreconcilable. At one level the debate over what to call work in the community seems a trivial irritation, but feelings about it go to the heart of questioning what that work actually is. Is community education a set of transferable skills which can be applied, through an informal but educationally-focused approach, in so wide a range of settings that there is little justification for calling community education a profession? Or does community education work combine those transferable skills with others that are more specific, using them in so unique a fashion that this constitutes a difference great enough to make community education a profession in its own right? The manner in which this question will be answered probably depends as much on the subjective standpoints of those addressing them as on analysis of how the work breaks down and we repeat our comment from the end of Chapter 3: the evidence suggests that if community education is different, the difference lies in its comprehensive, informal, and facilitative way of working, driven dominantly by what people and groups in the community want.

Chapter 5, however, points to other differences of opinion, such as the need and desirability of measuring outputs.

A further point to take from this chapter is the belief that community education is well placed to address the three Government policies of social inclusion, active citizenship and lifelong learning, which present an opportunity for community education to make an important contribution. There was considerable agreement, however, that community education should take social inclusion as its main or only focus; if this is to be community education policy, then training providers will need to know. The implication for training is that institutions may need to revisit their courses, making sure that whatever policy or policies are agreed as the community education focus are taken account of in clear and unambiguous ways. Recent course revisions may have achieved some of this already.

Opinions were unanimous that although collaborative working was desirable it was also difficult to put into practice. Stumbling blocks were thought very real and the factors needed to facilitate this way of working very important because without them collaboration could not happen. There are huge implications for training here, but at every stage, not just that of the recently qualified worker. If, for example, managers are ill-equipped to handle collaboration it will be important for them to be supported by quality in-service programmes. Even with support, however, the data suggest that some factors may remain beyond the control of community education and those preparing people to enter it.

6: Training Needs

6.1 Introduction

This brief chapter outlines some of the training needs of community education workers currently in employment (without, it should be noted, implying that relevant training is not provided). The chapter first draws on views of what those needs are coming from the employers whose views were canvassed in the course of this Review, then moves to the opinions of small number of recent graduates from professional community education training, who identified their own development needs. The chapter then gives an outline of the relevant findings from two other recent training needs analyses, both conducted before the current work was begun. The chapter ends with a brief comparison of the various findings in order to identify those training needs which seem to be outstanding.

6.2 The current work: employers' views of training needs

Asked in an otherwise 'free choice' question to identify up to three of the main training needs of their staff, employers in all the groups identified training needs in the broad areas of management, ICT, knowledge and understanding of a wide range of topics, monitoring, evaluation and research, education and training methods and working with others.

In addition, funding and fund-raising issues were identified by voluntary organisation and public sector employers.

The larger of all these broad areas (larger in terms of the number of comments made about them) lend themselves to finer analysis. This reveals that management training needs included coping with change, working with partners and how to manage finance, time, workload, people and projects.

With respect to knowledge and understanding, the training needs identified covered a very broad range. Employers wanted staff to have knowledge of current legislation, which itself comprised a large sub-group including racial equality, human and legal rights, equal opportunities and understanding of benefits. Otherwise, training was required in relation to social inclusion, politics and the political world, industrial relations and industrial tribunal representation, poverty, social care and social work. Staff training needs in specific fields, largely but not exclusively in the voluntary sector, ranged from knowing more about disability and epilepsy awareness and how to recognise abuse, to knowledge about the theatre. Community schools and FE colleges identified social inclusion issues; for the additional public sector employers, knowledge training was needed to focus on racial equality, human rights and industrial tribunal legislation. Local authority respondents pointed to a need for continued development in the core values and principles of community education, as well as in community learning plans and strategies and youth work.

With regard to monitoring and evaluation, both groups of local authority employers identified a development need in relation to 'best value' and needs assessment.

Associated with training in education and training methods, voluntary organisation employers were concerned with how volunteers and trainers, including supervisors, could best be trained.

For all the groups, the broad area of working with others included training in how to share good practice, give guidance, and deal with challenging behaviour such as aggression and anger. Several employers noted the need for training in communication generally, and many local authority respondents identified working with partners as an area for development.

Other areas for training included practical health and safety issues and personal development through constant up-dating and reflective self-evaluation.

6.3 Needs identified by recent graduates from training

When asked what additional training they wanted, half of the sixteen respondents indicated that they did not need or want any additional training. The remaining half, however, did. They wanted to take training further in areas which they had already started to pursue. For the eight, this meant more about youth work, child protection issues, mental health, IT, literacy, presentation skills, marketing, research and partnership working. One of the recent trainees intimated that there would always be a need to build on whatever knowledge pre-qualifying and qualifying professional training could give:

> *In the current climate, further training in initiating and working in partnership with other agencies would be useful ... There was a reasonable amount of training on this subject in my course, but it naturally could not predict future trends in the profession with any degree of accuracy.*
>
> (Recent graduate from pre-qualifying professional training)

Most of these recent trainees felt that such training was best provided through in-service, and all but one indicated that their employers helped develop staff through in-service training of some kind.

6.4 Existing training analyses – overview of relevant findings

In recent years two major training analyses have been undertaken which we feel it would be useful to mention here: one by SCVO, and by CLS.

6.4.1 SCVO training needs analysis

The first training needs analysis was conducted between late 1998 and early 1999 and is reported in 'Working in the Voluntary Sector' (SCVO, 1999). Confined to voluntary organisations, the survey included chief executives, managers, professional staff, senior care, administrative and project staff, clerical, care and catering staff and manual staff. Because the current Review of training is focused on existing HNC and degree-level professional training, our

interest is in the responses from people likely to have graduated from that training with a professional qualification but not so long ago that they have reached a very senior level, ie the professional staff group. It is not clear from the report how many such staff were involved in the survey as the detailed breakdown of respondents is not given in this way. However, the methodological appendix to the report warns that the staff surveyed cannot be taken to be representative of staff in the voluntary sector as a whole.

In this SCVO survey, training needs are identified first at broad and then, within each broad group, at more specific skills level. From a given list, respondents were asked to choose up to five skills that they would like to develop.

The percentage of paid professional staff wanting to develop any of the skills is small. For only one skill, team development, is it higher than 10% (the figure is actually 11%). As the report's authors point out, however, aggregating the percentages for each broad area suggests that people management skills in general are a focus of interest, followed in descending order by training skills and strategic management skills. These data for paid professional staff cannot be compared directly with the information for volunteers as the survey design does not allow it. However, asked if they had specific training needs, all but one volunteer identified some training issue, with some people being interested in highly specific skills and others in broader areas such as counselling, advice and advocacy.

6.4.2 CLS training needs analysis

The second training needs analysis is reported in 'Making Changes: the report of the national community learning training programme' (CLS, 2000). It was a wide-scale analysis which encompassed local authority departments which were main providers of community education and other local authority departments, as well as organisations in the voluntary and other public sectors. Managers' and practitioners' needs were canvassed, but it is on responses from the latter (the group whose training is the focus of the current Review) that we shall concentrate.

Although the survey aimed to draw responses from across local authority and public sectors, as the report's methodology section indicates the bulk of practitioner returns came from local authority respondents. The survey's findings are not therefore strong in relation to the voluntary sector practitioners, whose responses amounted to just over 5% of the total of 611 (approximately 30 returns).

For practitioners the key areas of development are reported as being

- community capacity building and supporting community organisations to understand and engage in political processes and manage to control resources
- targeting, engaging and sustaining the involvement in learning of excluded groups
- the delivery of learning addressing adult literacy and democracy

- the use of IT for learning
- the assessment of progress for learners.

These are broad areas. In its comment on the first of them, the authors of the report comment that 'it would seems that a cross-sectoral programme is needed to enhance staff skills, competence and confidence'. 'Making Changes' does not define these skills closely, but the current work moves some way towards this.

6.5 Summary and comment

6.5.1 Summary

Employer respondents to the Review questionnaire identified six major training need areas for their staff: management (encompassing various sub-sets), information technology, a wide range of knowledge, monitoring, evaluation and research, education and training methods and how to work with others. Voluntary organisation and additional public sector employers stressed funding and fund-raising issues particularly.

In the main, recent graduates from training identified a desire for training in knowledge areas specific to their current work. More general areas for development included information technology, presentational skills, monitoring and research and partnership working, all of which tend to confirm the accuracy of the employer view of training needs.

The SCVO's audit of training needs suggests that in the voluntary sector specifically there is a need to focus training on how to manage people, how to train others and on strategic management skills. The training needs analysis reported in 'Making Changes' (CLS, 2000) points to a need for training in the areas of community capacity building, excluded groups, teaching and learning skills, information technology and the assessment of learners' progress.

6.5.2 Comment

The findings from the current study are easier to tie in with the broad areas of training needs identified in the SCVO survey than with the training needs analysis reported in 'Making Changes', mainly because the latter are so broad. Common threads run through them all, however, and point overwhelmingly to training need in relation to the communication and negotiation skills required for managing people, and the planning and targeting skills needed to organise and conduct work on a strategic level.

Beyond this, all the analyses similarly point to a need to hone training skills through a focus on training methods. In addition, both the current study and the CLS survey highlight a requirement for training in evaluation skills, including self-evaluation and various types of assessment, and for concentration on developing IT skills. The training required in specific knowledge areas is vastly wide-ranging, particularly in the voluntary sector, and carries implications for pre-qualifying, qualifying and in-service training. It is important to note that to identify training needs in these areas does not necessarily suggest that no training has been received. The issue may simply be that people become

increasingly conscious of the need to develop their skills and knowledge as they progress through their working lives.

A major difficulty with all these training needs analyses, including that conducted for this study, is that none has been large enough in scale to give an overarching picture. When attempts are made to draw out patterns, there is the further difficulty that they have all been developed using different methods and groupings.

If future work is to be conducted, it would help if the voluntary and public sectors could agree on the groupings within each sector about which it is important to have information. It would then be easier to target information-seeking resources to specific groups. Although this might limit the breadth of information gathered by each survey, there would be a greater likelihood that it would have strength, and breadth could be achieved if different surveys were to complement each other.

7: Current Training

7.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to set out, very broadly, what the training options are at pre-qualifying and qualifying professional level, and to give some flavour of the various opinions held about their quality. Its sources of information are fivefold: published course documents such as course handbooks and prospectuses, interviews with training providers at ten of the institutions named below in paragraph 7.3.1[1], interviews with key stakeholders, the questionnaire to employers and the brief questionnaire to recent graduates.

The chapter begins with factual information, first summarising what CeVe requires if it is to endorse courses, then moving to outline the main training options open to someone wanting to gain a pre-qualifying or qualifying award in community education through courses endorsed by CeVe. This outline derives mainly from published documents. However, we wish to note the difficulty we encountered in putting together, from these, a complete picture in whose accuracy we had confidence. Wide variations in document layout were unhelpful, and we found much of the documentation to be inconsistent, both internally and across institutions. It might seem a simple matter to specify course length, for example, but sometimes components were measured in units (with the information needed to determine the length of a unit hard to track down), sometimes in days and sometimes in weeks. Different terms would be used within the same document for what it took time to realise were the same things. Where possible we have augmented the document-based information with data gathered from interviews, but there are inevitably gaps. Students wanting to make an informed choice of course against specific criteria of their own might find the process difficult. The information contained in paragraphs 7.3.5 and 7.3.6 derives from e-mailed responses to specific questions put to the four Scottish-based degree-level training providers.

From these factual data we move to outline the opinions about training held by the main informants to the Review. We first summarise what was said by training providers about their courses' strengths and weaknesses, then move to the opinions offered by key stakeholders, employers more widely and then the recent graduates.

7.2 CeVe guideline requirements

CeVe guidelines for the endorsement of graduate and post graduate training (CeVe, 1995) give guidance in relation to course structures, length, content (including a specific focus on fieldwork practice), course assessment and evaluation, as well as requirements for student admission to courses. They make clear that institutions must demonstrate a relationship between what is offered in their courses and the needs of the working world of community education, and courses must show a relationship to the six key elements (listed in

[1] We were unable to make sustained contact with the Scottish Churches Open College.

Chapter 3). Guidelines for HNC level courses contain similar advice, although requirements are matched to the appropriate course level.

Guidance such as this offers a mechanism for ensuring some commonality between courses at the same level, as training providers who wish to have their courses approved must take account of it. This guidance is broad, because

> It is not the intention of CeVe to prescribe in detail the curriculum or teaching methodology used in training programmes.
>
> (CeVe, 1995)

The freedom suggested by the above extract is likely to be reflected in the courses as they are delivered. The present Review was unable to experience directly how modules are taught, but some indications of the extent to which published descriptions matched delivery have been gathered through the perspectives of others. These perspectives are explored later in this chapter.

7.3 Existing options for pre-qualifying and qualifying professional training

At undergraduate level those seeking an award which will qualify them to work as professionals in community education currently have five basic options. Provided they meet the admission criteria, (1) they can move directly into full-time institution-based training at one of three institutions (2) they can enter part-time institution-based training at two institutions (3) if they are in work, they may pursue work-based (in-service) training at two institutions (4) if they are in work, they may enrol for training on the distance learning course offered by the YMCA George Williams College, perhaps with the support of their employer (5) they may apply to the Linked Work and Training Trust for employment plus training, although their chances may be slim; applicants are many and places few.

At postgraduate level aspirant community educators may enrol for professional training at all four Scottish institutions through courses which tend to last an academic year when completed full-time, and anything from 18 months to two years if pursued part-time. However, at both postgraduate and undergraduate level, the heavy emphasis on fieldwork blurs the distinction between 'full' and 'part-time' study and makes it hard to define.

Prospective students have the further option of studying for a higher level certificate leading to an award in a specific aspect of community education. If they wish, successful students can enter work with these awards but at this level they have gained 'pre-qualifying', not professional, status.

More detail about these options is given below.

7.3.1 Courses, Modes and Qualifications

CeVe currently endorses community education courses from eleven training providers. Four of these training providers offer institution-based courses leading to the recently introduced HNC (Higher National Certificate) 'Working

with Communities': Anniesland College, Falkirk College of Further and Higher Education, Jewel and Esk Valley College and Stevenson College. A fifth, the Scottish Churches Open College, offers the course 'Working with People in the Church and Community' which leads to a Certificate in Higher Education.

At degree level and beyond, the CLS Directory (CLS, 2000) lists a further five training providers. Three of these offer institution-based courses leading to undergraduate and postgraduate awards; they are the universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde, and Northern College of Education. Northern College also offers its degree through a work-based mode operating from two bases, while a fourth institution, Glasgow University, also runs a work-based in-service course. Interestingly, Glasgow offers its students the opportunity to acquire a certificate after the first year of study. Students may leave the course at this point but return to use the certificate at a later date to gain direct entry to the second year of the undergraduate degree.

The fifth training provider, located in Falkirk, is the Linked Work and Training Trust, which offers a work-based course and awards its Bachelor's degree through the Department of Adult and Continuing Education of the University of Glasgow. Trainees apply to the Trust (a consortium of employers and trainers) through responding to advertisements in the local press offering work with training. Candidates are interviewed as in the usual manner for employment (with a trainer representative on the panel) and if successful are guaranteed paid work plus study for the duration of the course.

These ten training providers are all based in Scotland. In addition, CeVe endorses degree-level training from an eleventh, English-based provider: the YMCA George Williams College, which offers Scottish students in employment the opportunity to study through distance learning.

All the degree-level courses lead to a full professional qualification in community education.

While there are only two courses at Higher Certificate level leading to an award in a specific aspect of community education work, options at degree level are more complicated. Here institutions offer several courses at undergraduate level, in addition to post graduate diplomas, certificates and Masters' degrees. The current Review has kept its chief focus on the main training route of undergraduate degrees, but will comment on higher level provision where appropriate.

The main undergraduate degrees offered are:

- The Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Arts (Hons) Community Education (BACE), which can be gained at Northern College of Education, the University of Edinburgh or the University of Strathclyde.
- The Bachelor of Community Education and Community Development (BCECD), offered at the University of Glasgow.
- The Bachelor of Arts in Informal and Community Education, which can be gained at the YMCA George Williams College.

The Universities of Edinburgh and Strathclyde also offer courses which convert existing awards to Bachelor degrees, and Northern College offers a BA/BA (Hons) course in professional development through which those holding a qualification below degree level in community education and other fields can acquire degree-level status.

Part-time routes through training are available from two of the three universities (Strathclyde and Glasgow), from Northern College and from the YMCA George Williams College. The University of Glasgow's Department of Adult and Continuing Education describes its training as day-release. The Linked Work and Training Trust (LWTT) sees the work as part of the training, so that students are considered to be full-time. As stated earlier, however, the distinction between 'full' and part-time' study is not always clear.

The main awards offered at postgraduate level are:

- Postgraduate Certificate in Community Education (PCCE) offered at the Universities of Strathclyde and Edinburgh
- Postgraduate Certificate (Initial Training) in Community Education (PGC(IT)CE) offered at the University of Edinburgh
- Postgraduate Diploma in Community Education (PGDipCE) offered at the University of Edinburgh and Northern College
- Master in Education in Community Education (MEdCE) offered at the University of Glasgow
- Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education (DipACE) offered at the University of Glasgow
- MSc in Adult and Continuing Education (Community Development) (MScACE(CD)) offered at the University of Glasgow.

Not all these postgraduate awards carry the same weight. Readers are referred to Figure 7.2 for detail.

7.3.2 Course lengths

The HNC 'Working with Communities' and the Certificate of Higher Education 'Working with People in the Church and Community' are one-year courses when pursued full-time and up to two years long when followed part-time. (The day release mode of study at Jewel and Esk Valley College allows for completion in 18 months.)

Bachelor degree courses are intended to last three years when studied full-time, but part-time completion can take from three to six years.

7.3.3 Admission to courses

The minimum age for entry to an HNC course is set by CeVe at 19 years. For more mature students (over 21 years old), the Colleges of Further and Higher Education do not require formal qualifications. Instead judgements are made about their practice competence and ability to cope with study. Some of the

training providers have given some accreditation for prior learning and prior experience; we return to the issues of APL (accreditation of prior learning) and APEL (accreditation of experiential learning) in Chapter 8.

At degree level, CeVe guidelines state that the qualifying age on completion should be 21 years or over, from which it follows that students may enter training at 18 years. Three of the training providers apply standard minimum formal entrance requirements to younger students (those under 21 years). These vary from institution to institution. For example, students applying to Edinburgh University are expected to have five Highers at B level, while students under 21 who apply to Northern College need three Highers. Some account is being taken of prior learning and experience, so that, for example, possession of an HNC can reduce the formal requirement at Edinburgh from five Highers at B to two or three at C. Documentation from the University of Strathclyde suggests that much thought has recently been given to this issue in relation to its community education courses.

No formal qualifications are required for entry on to the University of Glasgow's BCECD course or the LWTT's work-based course.

In general, when considering mature students degree level providers exercise greater flexibility than for younger ones, with a range of informal and formal criteria being taken into account.

Figures 7.1, 7.2 and 7.3 comprise grids which summarise the information given in the above paragraphs.

Figure 7.1: Summary of Bachelor-level degrees in community education (CeVe recognised)

Course key:					
APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning	BCECD	Bachelor in Community Education and Community Development	FT	Full-time
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning	DIPHE	Diploma in Higher Education	PT	Part-time
BACE	Bachelor of Arts in Community Education			DL	Distance learning
BAICE	Bachelor of Arts in Informal and Community Education				

Higher Education Institutions

	1	2	3a	3b	4	5	6
Degree	BACE	BACE	BACE	BACE	BCECD	BACE and CD	BAICE
description	full-time	full-time	full-time	workplace mode	day release/ in-service route	Apprenticeship model	distance learning mode
Length of FT course	3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs	3 yrs
Options	• honours (+ 1 year) • part-time (flexible up to 6 years)	• honours (+ 1 yr) • standard entrance requirements	• honours (+ 1 yr) • part-time • standard entrance	• part-time equivalent is work place • course can be accessed at [illegible] entre	• 1 year foundation course leads to certificate in community education work • (no [illegible] point that [illegible] provide re-entry later)	*none* • no prior formal qualifications	• honours (5 yrs DL PT) • part-time (4 yrs DL/PT) • distance learning • formal academic levels
Requirements and APEL/APL	• [illegible] standard entrance req • range of informal criteria if >21	• flexibility for mature students	• other qualifications and practice evidence taken into account		• evidence of relevant work experience and readiness to enter HE	• work-based	• list of criteria relating to prior knowledge and skill if <21 years
Placement	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes (a different setting)	the workplace (DL)
Inter/multi-disciplinary	shared 'faculty modules'	generic education course in 1st year	year 1 sociology BA1 with BA in social work	not specified	provided by other staff/ bring in others in field	interdisciplinary training environment	not specified

Sources: Course handbooks, prospectuses, validation/endorsement submissions where available or information provided by training providers in interview.

Course Key:			
PCCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Community Education	Dip ACE	Diploma in Adult and Continuing Education
PGC (IT)CE	Postgraduate Certificate (Initial Training) in Community Education	MSc ACE(CD)	MSc in Adult and Continuing Education (Community Development)
PGDip CE	Postgraduate Diploma in Community Education	FT	Full-time
MEd CE	Master in Education in Community Education	PT	Part-time

Figure 7.2 Summary of post graduate degrees in community education

	Higher Education Institutions				
	1	2	2a	3	4
Certification	PGCCE	PGC(IT)CE	PGC or PGDipCE MEdCE	PGDipCE	Dip/MSc ACE (CD)
Description	postgraduate qualification	Vocational course equal in value to 3 years BA Recruitment is pre-qualifying, completion is qualifying	Modular Masters courses and postgraduate certificate or diploma Not an initial professional training qualification		
Length of FT course	36 weeks	1 year	flexible	34 weeks	9 mths (Dip) 1 yr (MSc)
Options	• part-time	• part-time (2 yr - equivalent to in-service)	• part-time (flexible)	• part-time (work-based, 18 mths)	• part-time (Dip 18 mths) (MSc 24 mths)
Requirements	• graduate status in relevant discipline • prior experience • portfolio leads to personal study plan	• have a degree • experience	• degree or equivalent professional qualification • recent and relevant experience	• degree • relevant experience • demonstrate learning ability • satisfy demands of PG study	• graduate status • experience (2 years)
APEL/APL	Emphasis in recruitment and developing individualised learning programmes	not stated	yes	Demonstrating competences through APL	Admission with advanced standing
Placement	yes	yes	not stated	yes	yes
Inter/multi-disciplinary	share modularity with undergraduate degree so there may be elements	not stated	not stated	not stated	not stated

Sources: Course handbooks, prospectuses, validation/endorsement submissions where available or information provided by training providers in interview.

Figure 7.3: Summary of Higher Education level courses (HNC) (CeVe recognised)

Course Key:					
HNC WWC	HNC Working with communities	FT	Full-time	WWPCC	Working with People in the Church and Community
DipHE	Diploma in Higher Education	PT	Part-time		
APL	Accreditation of Prior Learning	APEL	Accreditation of prior experiential learning		

Further and Higher Education and Other Colleges

	1	2	3	4	A
Certification	HNC WWC	HNC WWC	HNC WWC	HNC WWC	Certificate in Higher Education WWPCC
Description	pre-qualifying course	pre-qualifying course	pre-qualifying course	pre-qualifying course	• open learning • part-time
Length of course	1 years (FT - 2 days per week)	2 years (2 evenings per week)	1 year (FT)	2 years (1 day per week)	2 years
Options	• part-time day release (2 years) • flexible modes	• part-time • flexible	• day release (18 mths/ flexible)		
Requirements	• minimum entrance requirements • practice competence • >19 years	• no formal requirements • prior experience.	• no formal entry requirements • work experience	• no formal entry requirements • work experience in community setting • >21 years	
APEL/APL	implicit	implicit	yes	yes	
Placement	yes (must maintain 3 hrs work or voluntary experience)	yes	yes	yes	
Inter/multi-disciplinary elements	broad view	outside speakers	• shared exercise with other students • lecturers from other departments		

Sources: Course handbooks, prospectuses, validation/endorsement submissions where available or information provided by training providers in interview.

7.3.4 Course content

A scan through course documentation reveals some common strands and themes across the training programmes. Many of these stem from CeVe course requirements (some of which are summarised above), so that courses aim to be coherent with the values which CeVe has identified as underpinning community education, with community education principles and with the key elements required for the competence-based nature of the training. Modules across the three years of study for the BA degree tend to be linked and inter-related and placement is central to provision.

All institutions provide elements of theory and practice through course work, assignments, assessments and placements. Students are offered the opportunity to become reflective practitioners via group work, sharing experiences and evaluation in order to encourage them to develop a critical awareness of their own learning and practice and promote their own professional development. The training providers also recognise the need for staff and students to have an awareness of the changing social and political context in which community education operates and to make sure the courses reflect this.

Beyond these common features, the programme structure of each provider appears to vary in emphasis and balance. Module descriptors and course outlines differ in tone, description and language style which makes comparisons based on printed material alone difficult. The courses offered by each training institution reflect the evolutionary nature of thinking within departments, differences in the requirements of individual institutions, and the varied interests and expertise of teaching staff. Some courses publish detailed module descriptors while others offer general headings under which several different topics are grouped. As stated at the beginning of this chapter, documentation from different providers presents learning outcomes in different formats and with different emphases.

To give a flavour of course content we include in Appendix 4 summaries of the content of three courses, one offered at HNC level, one institution-based and at degree level and one work-based distance learning programme. It is important to note, however, that many of the courses have been recently revised, or are undergoing revision, so the documents analysed for the Review do not give an up to date picture of provision overall. However, during the course of data gathering the four Scottish-based degree level training institutions provided information in response to specific questions by e-mail about course changes and the extent to which they kept each other informed of what they were offering to students. This information is summarised below.

7.3.5 Course changes since 1998

In their different ways all four Scottish-based degree level training providers believed they had moved since 1998 to take account of 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a) and its recommendations. One had completely rewritten its degree to the satisfaction of both internal and external re-validators, content being closely linked to 'the Osler report'. This re-thinking

is reflected in the language of the documentation supplied to the Review by this training provider, so that, for example, community capacity building, promoting personal development and social inclusion are given prominence. The three other training providers at this level also pointed to ways in which courses had been revised to take account of Osler recommendations. A particular focus had been the new Government policies which had been and continued to be debated and examined for implications to training and practice. All the training providers stressed social inclusion as a key course subject, and most also noted their emphasis on active citizenship; one stated that a whole new curriculum in these areas was on offer, and another that courses were subject to a process of constant discussion and updating, with elements and emphases being changed as a result. Collaborative practice and partnership working were also being given increased attention. One provider commented that health and welfare policies were a focus of study, with the policy documents being made available to students, the ideas underpinning them being discussed and activity in those areas examined from both theoretical and practical standpoints.

7.3.6 Information-sharing between institution-based degree level training providers

These four training providers also furnished the Review with information about the extent to which they kept each other informed about their courses, and thus aware of each other's similarities and differences. Three of the four meet at least once each year to discuss issues of mutual interest, the last such meeting being in September 2000. They exchange copies of each other's course documentation and notify each other about significant course changes. According to group members the University of Glasgow is not included in these meetings, because when it was established Glasgow did not offer a BA degree in community education, nor did it have a community education department. However, the University of Glasgow has indicated to the Review its interest in participating in such meetings.

A further forum for contact was noted to be the national course planning and monitoring team for fieldwork supervision in community education, which gave opportunity for regular discussion of placement issues. Implications for content were fed back into the course review system.

7.4 Training: the providers' perspective

7.4.1 Strengths and weaknesses of institution-based degree provision

Strengths

The four institution-based degree awarding providers identified five major strengths in their training: the provision of a sound knowledge base which gave opportunity for reflection, the linking of theory to practice, strong links with the world of community education work, high quality staff and flexibility of mode and access. We explore each of these below.

All but one of this group of training providers emphasised the strength of the knowledge base their courses gave. As was stated earlier, course content

followed CeVe guidelines so that components such as social policies, working with people and in groups, education and management skills were included. In all this, the notion of the reflective practitioner was central. One provider explained that

> *The core is to get students thinking about community and about education, and the way that history influences our conception of these ... to persuade students to think and carry on thinking.*
>
> (Degree-level training provider)

A second strength was said to be that courses linked theory to practice. Explaining that this was done through building on students' existing experience, one training provider said the course emphasis was

> *on underpinning their skills with knowledge, looking at how they identify needs, how to promote participation, how to empower and how to make it sustainable after a community education worker may have left a post. It is the real thing.*
>
> (Degree-level training provider)

This provider regarded the course as offering in-service. Students on the course were therefore typically in work, coming to the institution for study one and a half days each week. The course encouraged students to reflect on their employment experience from the first year on, getting them to write and analyse significant things in a weekly learning log. A different provider, whose course was offered in work based as well as institution-based mode, pointed out that the work-based course had been devised only after the department had looked at various work-based training practices. A further provider stressed that students emerged from courses as practically competent, and a high proportion went straight into employment.

Training providers also pointed out that the placement was a major way in which theory and practice were linked (the issue of placements is addressed more fully in Chapter 8).

This linking of theory and practice was believed to be furthered by the extent to which the providers kept in touch with the working world. For most training providers, an important element of this keeping in touch involved drawing in, as lecturers, community education practitioners from outside employment. This was thought to have advantages, for both training institutions and practitioners, whose practice was enhanced. One department, suffering from full-time staff shortages over the last few years, had turned necessity into virtue and was pleased with the results: the institution had employed part-time professionally qualified community education workers and thus gained 'people with excellent knowledge in particular areas'. It was now the institution's practice to 'go out and look for people who can provide us with what we want for a particular model.'

With regard to formal contact with employers, the interview data which provides the bulk of information in this section on strengths and weaknesses can be supplemented with data received via e-mail from the four Scottish degree-level training providers, who were asked to make specific comment on

the extent and nature of such contact. Two of the four noted the importance of network meetings with the local authorities with which they worked as well as with voluntary agencies and groups. In one case the network met twice a year, in the other, six times. In addition, one institution commented on its termly meetings with a local authority at which mutual concerns were discussed, as well as ideas for future collaborative work. Two training providers stressed the extent to which representation from the field was included on various of their committees, such as on the Board of Governors, Academic Board, Community Education and Social Work Committee, course committees, selection and assessment panels and planning groups. One training provider drew attention to a series of presentations it had made about its degree to employers in both local authorities and the voluntary sector.

The interview data on strengths shows that the staff who were delivering the courses were widely thought to comprise a third strength in that they kept in touch with the field through activities such as chairing groups, serving on advisory bodies in community education and engaging in collaborative work and consultancies in both the voluntary and local authority sectors. Two institutions emphasised that staff involvement in externally funded national, regional and local projects gave them experience which was fed back into practice. Moreover, staff were said to be participants in a strong and active research culture which encouraged them to take a global perspective, and updated their links with the field through conference attendance and development courses. The depth and extent of staff experience was also stressed. One provider recognised that when this experience was invested in staff who had been in post a long time, those outside might view it as a weakness. However, he stressed that this view would be misguided because 'new blood' was coming in and staff enthusiasm was always seen as important.

Some providers stressed a fourth strength: the flexibility associated with their courses, whether of access or structure. One pointed out that courses were open to students without academic qualifications, who comprised 80% of the student body, and that most such students were successful. The course therefore gave them a qualification they would not otherwise have had and widened their career opportunities. Another provider stressed the flexible nature of the work-based provision offered, which was delivered from two bases with staff travelling to students as needed. As noted above, several providers offered part-time and other flexible modes of course delivery.

Beyond these kinds of strengths, which were identified by most degree-level providers, were others not claimed so generally. They included having a strong IT emphasis and offering students a sound infrastructure of support.

Weaknesses

Asked to reflect on any weaknesses they might feel lay in their courses, this group of degree-level training providers suggested there might be room for improvement in content. In spite of an overall belief that content was good, two

of the four recognised that their curricula and associated materials were in need of updating.

There was also a perception that courses were content-heavy. One provider in particular stressed this point, linking it to the breadth of knowledge and experience that students needed as a preparation for community education work:

> *I suppose* [a weakness is] *the impossibility of actually preparing the students for anything that they might encounter. Trying to cram too much into the course.*
>
> (Degree level training provider)

He went on to say that extending course length would not be an answer to this problem. Many students would not be able to afford longer study periods and in any case

> *However long the course is, you can't possibly prepare people for everything. So it is a weakness – but it is a structural weakness because of the way things are.*
>
> (Degree level training provider)

All these training providers had comments to make about placements. However, most of these have more to do with circumstances leading to problems than with weaknesses of the courses, and we felt would be more appropriately covered in the following chapter.

7.4.2 Strengths and weaknesses of work-based degree level training

Strengths

The two providers of solely work-based training were in no doubt that the major strength of their courses was that, in the words of one, 'Everybody is ready to pick up a job of work at the end.' Because work and learning were integrated, students did not need to strive to match theory and practice.

Practical aspects of the courses were strong but this was not thought to mean they lacked educational foci. One of the two emphasised that his course took a professional and intellectual approach to training, with a strong educational steer that put the student clearly at the centre of learning. The other provider also emphasised the centrality of individual students, for each of whom the course was a different experience, but at the same time felt the course promoted a 'group collective learning' response: students learned about a variety of situations and work settings from their fellows.

Weaknesses

When asked what weaknesses there might be, one training provider voiced concerns about funding. This work-based course was expensive to run and its future under current funding arrangements was uncertain. The amounts set aside to fund placements might not be adequate, as some placement providers expected fees, and student travel could be expensive too. Some students had to meet child care expenses, but there was no funding to cover these.

The other training provider noted that some of the course materials needed updating.

Both the work-based providers wondered if their students were at a disadvantage without the support of a larger student body. It would be easy for them to become over-introspective, or lonely.

7.4.3 Strengths and weaknesses of training at HNC level

Strengths

All four HNC training providers were proud of their course content. One provider described this in vibrant terms:

> *It has been a well thought-out and good course. It's an exciting course, and the team are excited about it, and therefore the students get excited about it ... I'm never tired. I get as excited on a Friday morning now as I did when I started the course four years ago.*
>
> (HNC level training provider)

Courses of this calibre, he believed, gave students confidence to realise their potential.

All the providers believed course content matched up well to CeVe requirements. This meant it served as a good preparation for degree work, bridging the gap between scant or long-ago experience of study and the demands that would be made by working for a degree. As one provider explained, the HNC was an important stepping stone which encouraged many students to attempt further study:

> *Many community workers are not ready to go straight into a degree course at university – it's frightening. A year here can make all the difference. We have many students who say "I just want to do the one year" but by Christmas they are filling in their forms.*
>
> (HNC level training provide)

A close match with what CeVe required was also thought to help ensure a match with work in the field.

There were other ways of doing this, though. One training provider pointed out that because most of her students were in work, the HNC was a form of in-service and they learned while they were working. A second provider stressed the strength of ties within his department to real community education practice, telling us

> *I think the fact that we have four qualified community workers who are all still practising or at the very least have very recent practice [is a great strength]. Most of us are still doing youth clubs or whatever. One of the day to day requirements is that if we don't have continual practice then we have got to get out into secondment. The college committed itself to that. We had one member of staff out for a year, last year.*
>
> (HNC level training provider)

Two of the HNC training providers drew our attention to the flexibility of their courses, which recognised existing experience and knowledge. One explained that the college was still experimenting with course delivery, through, for example, the offer of free-standing options in the evenings. He thought that

> *People might be interested. Even if they don't want the whole qualification, they might be interested in free-standing units, and if they wanted to collect the free-standing units then that would be OK.*
> (HNC level training provider)

To date there had been little uptake, perhaps because the college had not advertised the option widely enough. There were plans to keep trying, and also to develop on-line learning. A different provider, emphasising the extent to which the course had been designed to articulate with a degree course, said it had been a source of disappointment to students that the university's idea of a part-time programme was daytime study: no part-time community education courses were scheduled in the evenings.

Weaknesses

Two of the four providers recognised that their courses could do more in terms of training for collaborative work and building inter-professional relationships. 'We look at collaboration a bit, but we don't look at it in real terms,' acknowledged one, who continued,

> *We tend to think that they will do that more at Moray House because we don't have enough time. Maybe* [we could look at] *an understanding, put in something on understanding the roles and philosophies of other professionals that you might come across. We don't do any of that.*
> (HNC level training provider)

Although there were opportunities for students to study with students from other disciplines, these opportunities were acknowledged to be limited.

Other weaknesses related to the difficulties of keeping staff up to date, poor course marketing and the need for revision of one part of a course.

7.5 Key stakeholder opinions of training

We did not feel it would be appropriate to ask these stakeholders to distinguish between their perceptions of training at degree level and training for HNCs – indeed, only ten of the thirteen believed themselves to be in a position to comment on training at all. It is likely, however, that most if not all had degree-level training in mind when they spoke with us; when references were made to individual institutions, the references always related to training at that level. A few stakeholders focused their comments on training provided at one institution or another and, within the limits imposed by the ethics of confidentiality, we have tried to reflect this.

Overall, the ten stakeholders who commented were more liable to see weaknesses than strengths in the current training offered, although some were far more critical than others.

7.5.1 Strengths

Asked what strengths they saw in current training, a few of the ten accepted that it was good on theory, giving students time to look at themselves as human beings through group and one-to-one situations. This was a strength because it gave people a chance to face challenges, a space to find themselves. However, a

local authority representative view tempered his acceptance of this by adding that 'what happens afterwards is less positive'.

Other stakeholders commented that the colleges were far less rigid than they used to be, having responded to funding as well as to employer and customer demands. As a national organisation representative put it,

> *The universities have worked very hard at more flexible approaches to training, access, part-time modes, open learning modes. I mean a whole range ... Ten years ago there was this monolithic route that you went in and you did your three year degree or your one year past graduate and that was it, that was the only route. That has changed enormously.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

And a voluntary organisation representative expressed the view that recent graduates from training were good; he could think of several examples of placements which had been encouraging.

One stakeholder in the voluntary sector had close links with the work-based distance learning course through his trainee worker programme, and was keen to draw attention to its strengths. He particularly liked its flexibility in not insisting that students must go on placements. 'We want to have [trainees] working ... on a full-time basis,' he said. 'We don't want to snatch them out of that environment for three months.' But he also believed the course to be challenging, forcing students to ask hard questions about the organisations in which they worked and about their own motives. This might have unsettling consequences: as a result of the latter, two trainees had transferred to teacher training having realised they were in the wrong environment, but the stakeholder saw this as proof that the questioning process was genuine. And having trainees question the organisations in which they worked was thought to be

> *A very good thing for organisations because it's a two-way thing ... All of our host organisations that have had trainees have said they have gained an awful lot from having the trainees going through the process so far.*
>
> (Voluntary sector representative)

In this stakeholder's opinion, graduates from this work-based distance learning course were outstanding when compared to others.

Two other stakeholders, both representatives of national organisations, strongly believed that work-based forms of training were preferable to end-on models where students were assumed to be 'pre-service' although in practice they were not. Work-based training had the major advantage that it met a specific need, unlike end-on training which was broad and generic. This was fine so long as the people who benefited from it could apply their training, but increasingly this was not the case. As one of the stakeholders expressed it,

> *No two jobs are the same, and the problem is when you do a generic training you go into a post that is more of something than* [it is] *of something else. It could be more of working with young people, it could be more working with people with disability, it could be more working with systems, structures, grant aid. You don't need the same fundamental knowledge base* [for all these] *but you do need the wherewithal to be able to take all the bits that you do to make it work.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

A further strength of parallel/ apprenticeship training models was believed to be that they ensured that the people who trained had already demonstrated commitment and motivation. Such people often had a real sensitivity to those in a disadvantaged community – it did not have to be learnt.

One of these stakeholders expressed belief that while end-on training models disadvantaged people with experience but without a conventional education background, work based training gave them opportunity. In one stakeholder's experience such activists were well able to hold their own:

> *My experience with students of this kind is that, given support to develop their confidence, they are equally able as those who come from more conventional education routes from more privileged backgrounds.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

In this way work-based training ensured that community education 'owned its own rhetoric', drawing people out of the community to which they afterwards returned.

7.5.2 Weaknesses

Some stakeholders were not sure they agreed with the notion that trainees received a good theoretical grounding. One, representing a national organisation, complained of bad teaching that had led one student to misunderstand the exercise in introspection:

> *The thing that had absolutely appalled me was, she said she had done a degree in architecture where she had spent so many years being taught to be objective and I was thinking, good, that's what I'm looking for, and then ... she came on to the post graduate diploma and it had all been about herself ... and that had been a wonderful experience ... What they had failed to do there was make her see that yes, she had to go into herself to understand what she was as an educator* [but that she must return to work] *knowing her strengths and weaknesses and learning so that she could be objective again.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

This stakeholder did not feel the student was an isolated example; she saw a similar attitude 'constantly, in some of the young graduates'. They needed to be told it was not *their own* experience which counted, but that of the people they worked with.

A representative of a different national organisation also questioned the strength of the theoretical element in training, but for a different reason. He doubted if students had enough time to reflect on and challenge with each other what they had learnt. This aspect of training used to be better:

> *The quality of the learning opportunity within the colleges has changed over the years because they don't have as much group time as they once had, which is all about sharing and challenging and making mistakes ... Now, it's very much: well, you've got x hours with tutors, you've got x hours practice, you've got x hours for your own self-study.*
>
> (National organisation representative)

He felt this was an important point, because the situations that newly qualified workers were required to deal with were increasingly complex.

A local authority representative emphasised the serious results that came from an inadequate marriage of theory and practice. In his experience graduates were unable to structure learning groups or participation events. They were often 'not sure what to do, or even what the guiding principles are', to the extent they were often 'at sea – it's as bad as that'. Yet it was of critical importance that students had the ability to make constructive interventions:

> *It's no good being challenging and philosophical with people, or pleased to meet with people. That is not good enough. You've got to have a toolbox* [of skills] *... otherwise you're having an intervention based on getting on with somebody. That is dangerous. That is dodgy.*
>
> (Local authority representative)

His experience was echoed by a health board representative whose recent attendance at a meeting run by 'community education' was 'the worst thing I have ever been to in my life'. There had been

> *No concept of group process or how to establish a group for working through issues ... The whole democratic process, the whole thing which underpins community development practice, there was no concept of it in there ... There was just no thought given to what was going on.*
>
> (Health board representative)

The lack of practical skills was a strong theme among the stakeholder group.

Some traced this to weaknesses in placements. Reflecting on his own fairly recent training, a health board representative commented that some of the placements people had experienced had been 'really, really bad' and emphasised that in his opinion some close vetting of placements was necessary. A national organisation representative was of the opinion that the 'synthesis' between the practice placement and the training providers was not as effective as it could be. He saw a need for improvement in many aspects, including the nature of the contracts, the relationship between the supervisor and the tutor and the number of visits that took place. We explore the important issue of placements further, in the next chapter.

A further weakness of training, expressed by several stakeholders but particularly by those in the voluntary sector, was that the institutions were out of touch with what the field needed. This meant that the skills students acquired in training might not be relevant. Looking back on his own training, a voluntary sector representative could see little relevance to his work in anything that he had learned, remarking that his own skills had been gained through other training or through his employment. He was resigned to the prospect of the organisation's having to train recent graduates in the skills and knowledge it needed them to have, like fund-raising, how to operate within the realities of voluntary work and legislation.

While agreeing that training providers were out of touch with the field, however, a national organisation representative doubted that these training institutions could possibly keep up with employer needs because they changed so rapidly.

A related criticism, made by a few stakeholders, was that college lecturers were out of touch. Often they were 'people who had been institutionalised for a very long period of time, talking about things that they had no understanding of'.

A further criticism of current training provision was that the institutions' perspectives were too narrow. The health board representative in particular stressed that there was no emphasis on wider social policies or policy analysis. Nor was there training in how local Government worked and related to individuals. In addition, he commented on the poor quality of multi-disciplinary training, which in his opinion was not properly built into training structures:

> *We did some joint stuff with social work as part of the course* [but] *were just locked in a room and left to it. There was nothing really structured about what you were doing, there was nothing about development of each other's concepts, looking at the commonalities and trying to share that and develop or reduce the differences. There was nothing like that. It was just basically in a room in an exercise.*
>
> (Health board representative)

People from outside had been brought in, but the quality of their inputs had been highly variable and again this stakeholder felt some close vetting for quality was needed.

The examples given in the foregoing paragraph are drawn from one person's view of training at one institution, but his perception of inadequate co-training with other professions was shared by others, including a local authority representative who stressed that one day a year was not enough. He felt that while the training providers would claim the barriers were pragmatic, such as timetabling difficulties, in reality they had more to do with professional defensiveness:

> *The teaching profession dominates the colleges of education and is the most professionally defensive profession I have come across ... Working with other professions is something school teachers find extraordinarily difficult, and it's in that connection that the colleges of education don't really pursue community education joint training.*
>
> (Local authority representative)

The voluntary sector stakeholder whose organisation maintained close links with the work-based distance learning course identified a further weakness: that although other training providers might be more flexible than they used to be, the flexibility did not go far enough. His organisation would like to give trainees more variety, and had tried to work with other training providers, but 'All the university part-time and distance learning courses that we were able to find had a requirement of a three-month placement in another organisation'. This was felt inappropriate, not only for the trainees, who were learning a lot in their posts, but also for the host organisations that were paying half their salaries. He felt this inflexibility stemmed from nothing more than habituation to existing practice:

> *There's a "because we do that" attitude in a lot of the other courses and the structure of them that we found very inflexible ... Our experience of placements is that you get very limited value, can do very limited work in getting a full understanding of a community in three months.*
>
> (Voluntary sector representative)

The work-based distance learning provider was therefore preferred for the organisation's trainee development programme. However, the stakeholder quoted above identified a weakness in the distance learning model in that there was a 'very great sense of distance' between Edinburgh and London, to which trainees sometimes had to travel when the year group was being gathered together. This was compounded by the provider's imperfect understanding of the distances that could be involved for trainees having to travel through Scotland, and it was hoped that this particular institution would soon have a Scottish base.

Many stakeholders stressed that in identifying the weaknesses summarised in the foregoing paragraphs they were not laying all the blame at the door of the training institutions. Universities and colleges were constrained by the quality of placement provision, and in any case many stakeholders thought the most appropriate way to address many of the deficits in training that employers experienced was through in-service training: it was probably the case that no training provider could possibly service all employers' needs.

7.6 Views from the wider field

Through questionnaires, both employers and the small sample of recent graduates who contributed data to this Review gave the overall impression of being less concerned about current training than were the key stakeholders, perhaps because information provided by the latter emerged from in-depth interviews where there was time to dwell on difficulties.

7.6.1 Employer satisfaction with training

Asked in the questionnaire how well they thought training had equipped the staff in their organisations or departments for the work they were now doing, none of the employer groups showed great dissatisfaction. Table 7.1 below illustrates how responses were divided, and shows that more than half the employers in every group thought their staff had been prepared for work either very or quite well.

Table 7.1: How well employers felt professional training equipped staff for work

	Voluntary organisations	Community / New C'ity schools	FE Colleges	LA departments (main providers)	LA departments (other providers)	Additional Public Sector employers
	n=47	n=12	n=18	n=36	n=20	n=14
very well	10	4	6	10	3	1
quite well	16	5	4	18	9	7
not particularly well	2	2	1	6	1	0
badly	0	0	0	0	0	0
no response	19	1	7	2	7	6

It is notable that none of the respondents used the 'badly' option, and that the proportions of 'no response' rates were relatively high, especially in the voluntary organisation and additional public sector returns. In our view the

latter is likely to reflect respondents' inability to relate staff performance to training they received before entering work with their organisations.

Most of the 72 employers who responded to the invitation to explain their choices reiterated that staff seemed well equipped for what was needed and were doing a good job, which is at least as likely to be a comment on the staff as on their training. A few people commented that performance was variable and a small number agreed that recent graduates from training were better equipped for work than graduates in the past.

With respect to training strengths, one employer observed that the staff had received a strong theoretical grounding, and another that training had given a good basis for practice. One employer remarked that graduates from a work-based course were particularly good.

The most common weakness employers identified was that recent students had difficulty putting policy into practice. Several comments focused on the changing nature of the work, which needed to be reflected in training through updating. Both courses and lecturers were thought to need this. Other comments were that staff lacked both the interpersonal and the specialist skills that current work demanded, identified too closely with the community and were not well prepared for policy development or research.

7.6.2 Recent graduates' opinions of their training

On the whole, recent graduates' perspectives on their training echoed the relatively positive views held by employers. Asked how well, overall, they felt their courses had prepared them for their current work, a large majority of the 16 respondents felt they had been very or quite well prepared by their training, with the most useful aspect of their courses thought to be the linking of theory to practice, particularly through placements. Some appreciated the diversity and range of subjects they had covered and others the opportunity for critical thinking and analysis, the level of support they had received, encouragement to use their initiative and the focus on being professional and accountable.

Less useful aspects of training had included outdated learning materials, the limited use of computers, 'the finance bit' and joint sessions with other community education students. There was some negative comment relating to the timing of assignments and placements, repetition of course elements and a feeling of being indoctrinated.

7.7 Summary and comment

This chapter sets out the broad options open to people wanting to train for a professional qualification in community education, and examines the opinions held of that training from a number of perspectives.

7.7.1 Summary of strengths and weaknesses seen in training

Views at institution-based degree level

With regard to institution-based degree level training, training providers felt it to offer a sound knowledge base with theory and practice linked through placements and high quality, experienced staff who maintained connections with the real world of community education, and a flexibility of course mode and access which widened opportunities for students without traditional backgrounds in education. Weaknesses of the training provided were thought to be some outdated course elements and corresponding course materials, content-heaviness of courses and various problems with placements.

Views at work-based level

Those providing solely work-based training felt it was an excellent preparation for work as theory and practice were inextricably linked while at the same time it was possible to keep an educational focus and ensure the trainee was at the centre of the training. A weakness of one such course was thought to be its high cost which raised questions of sustainability, while another was that students might feel isolated. One of the providers saw a need to update materials.

Views at HNC level

The main strengths of training for HNCs focusing on an aspect of community education were believed to lie in quality content that matched CeVe guidelines as well as articulating with degree level content. This made the HNC a valuable bridge between further and higher education. Ties with community education practice were thought to be strong through staff who remained in that practice or took regular secondment, a consequent strength being that the HNCs were delivered from a strong staff base. Courses and their structures were flexible and still under experimentation. The main weaknesses identified were limited training for collaborative and multi-disciplinary work and the difficulties of updating staff.

Views at key stakeholder level

Key stakeholders varied in the extent of their criticism but on the whole were more negative than positive about training. They accepted that it gave students time for reflection and considering theory. They also accepted that the training providers had increased the flexibility of their courses. However, the training was criticised on a number or grounds. These included poor teaching, which was thought to undermine the value of the reflective element, insufficiently robust opportunities for inter-student debate and challenge of each other's thinking, a failure to ensure that students could translate skills into practice and the unsatisfactory nature of placements. The courses were still thought insufficiently flexible, with institutions resistant to providing what employers needed and indeed out of date in terms of knowing what that was. Staff were felt to be out of touch. Course content was believed to be too narrow and there was little or no training for working with others.

Views at employer level

The employer perspective was different in that employers tended to believe graduates from training had been prepared quite or very well for the work they did, although relatively high 'no response' levels suggest that many employers felt unable to comment. Some remarked that graduates were better equipped than they used to be; work-based training was singled out for praise. Some graduates were thought to have a good theoretical grounding. The main weaknesses employers identified were that students had trouble putting skills into practice and that training was out of date. Some graduates were felt to lack both interpersonal and specific skills, be unable to distance themselves from the community and be poorly prepared for policy or research.

Views at recent graduate level

The recent graduates themselves also felt that overall they had received quality training, especially in linking theory to practice. Placements in particular had been valued, as was the diversity of course work, training in critical thinking and analysis and the encouragement to independent action. They commented on having received good support and had enjoyed the focus on professionalism and accountability. On the negative side, they remarked on outdated learning materials, limited use of computers, the way financial matters had been covered and the unsatisfactory nature of joint sessions with other community education students.

7.7.2 Comment

The discrepancies between these views of strengths and weaknesses are striking. On the broadest level, the critical views expressed by the key stakeholders contrast markedly with the more positive perspectives taken by the training providers, most of the employers and the recent graduate sample. What can be made of this? It is to be expected that the training institutions should defend their courses, and it must be re-emphasised that both the employer and recent graduate samples are too small for conclusions to be drawn from them. On the other hand, the key stakeholders themselves are only thirteen in number, and only ten of them commented on training. Their views are very well-informed, and they had clearly given much thought to training issues, but only a study designed to test the generalisability of employers' and recent graduates' opinions of training can determine how widely the various perspectives illustrated in this chapter are held. In addition, we wonder how far stakeholders' views of training are drawn from experience of provision which is now out-of-date. As has been pointed out earlier, changes had been made to courses but had not at the time of this Review reached published course descriptions, and graduates have yet to emerge from the new courses.

Setting that aside, one of the most striking features of these data is that almost all the aspects of training that training providers saw as strengths were areas where some key stakeholders claimed weakness. Where providers saw experienced staff, key stakeholders saw staff grown stagnant in post and out of touch with current practice. What training providers saw as a crucially

important concentration on theory and thought, stakeholders saw as excessive reflection which displaced a focus on practical skills and how to apply them. A possible exception is the issue of course flexibility, where some stakeholders praised the growing availability of part-time and work-based modes of training, but as the evidence suggests, there was still a feeling that training institutions had some way to go.

On the other hand, there were some areas of agreement. Work based training attracted more positive comment than other forms of training, both from key stakeholders and employers. All parties identified problems in updating, not only courses and materials but staff. There was also agreement that placements are a source of difficulty. It is to placements and other issues emerging from the data presented so far that the next chapter turns.

8: Other Training Issues

8.1 Introduction

As the foregoing chapter makes clear, the issue of placements was widely considered to be beset with difficulties. Because of this, and because of their clear importance in most current community education HNC and degree level training models, we have chosen to give placements particular focus in this chapter.

We also take this opportunity to comment separately on the issues of training for collaborative work, APL/APEL, and equality of training opportunity.

8.2 Placements

CeVe recognises the importance of field experience by allocating substantial proportions of time to it in the guidelines for training. All the training providers except one (the work-based distance learning provider) required that students acquired their fieldwork through placements. Different training providers varied in the length and timing of these placements, but whatever model was adopted, training providers, particularly those offering institution-based degree level training, encountered difficulties. In the main, these had to do with availability and cost, both of which had implications for quality. The following paragraphs first explore the difficulties associated with placements more fully, drawing on information from degree level training providers (the issue of placements does not seem to have been so much of a problem for providers of HNC level training). They then set these perceptions against views of the value of placements provided first by recent graduates from training and then by employers.

8.2.1 Placement problems: comments from institution-based degree-level training providers

In relation to placement availability, some of the training providers complained that local authorities did not provide as many placements as had been expected:

> *It is important that* [students] *have some knowledge of diversity, but the difficulty is that you have to balance this against what is available ... the premise was that the local authorities would provide the bulk of the placements* [as part of a] *partnership between the training institutions and the local authorities, but the local authorities have never, for all kinds of good reasons, been able to fulfil their part of the bargain.*
>
> (Degree level training provider)

One degree-level provider described finding placements as 'a real headache' and another commented that the task of finding them grew harder as the year progressed. While another acknowledged that the local authorities' quota of places given to the institution was helpful, he stressed the need for more local places.

One training provider made the point that the scarcity of placements meant that institutions were unable to guarantee either choice or quality. More placements

had to be offered than would be taken up if students were to be offered real choice, and much of what was offered was of little interest. This stakeholder believed that only strategic thinking at national level could deal with the issue.

Degree-level training providers questioned whether supervision was all it might be. They offered supervisor training, but as one pointed out, often those who needed the training were the ones who did not take it up. Another pointed out that the provision of quality placements was linked to the ability to pay for them: training providers unable to offer incentives were dependent on the goodwill of employers, and not in a position to insist on anything. When training providers were asked about the nature of the links they had with placement providers, it became clear that in most cases these were informal.

The ability of an institution to pay for its placements did not make for plain sailing, however. One such institution made the point that if placements came from the voluntary sector where payment was expected, placements became very expensive. The payment was not much, but still the costs mounted up:

> *We only pay them £200* [per placement] *which is I think less than a third of what they get paid by social work, but I would say that 70% of our placements are there. This makes our course quite expensive.*
>
> (Degree level training provider)

In total this institution paid about £18,000 a year on fees and travel. This made the course vulnerable to cuts from within its own institution because

> *The university might decide, quite sensibly, that it would rather have 35 students doing sociology, which is much cheaper than the average cost of doing community education.*
>
> (Degree level training provider)

Such an expensive element of the course made it doubly vulnerable to being cut because community education was in the lower category of SHEFC (Scottish Higher Education Funding Council) funding. In an attempt to bring costs down, the university was proposing to replace the second year placement with a work experience, paid or voluntary, of 40 days spread over the entire year. If they wished, students would be able to complete the work experience in blocks, with days earmarked for study each week. The students would find the work places themselves, but difficulties were not expected with this as most were working anyway.

The funding problems anticipated by one of the work-based training providers in relation to support for placements have been noted earlier, in Chapter 7.

Data presented in the previous chapter suggest that quality of placements might indeed be a cause for concern, one of the key stakeholders remembering poor placements from his own (recent) training days and another commenting that his experience was that trainees gained little from them. This is not necessarily a general picture, however, as the information gathered from recent graduates from training shows.

8.2.2 Recent graduates' views of placements

Most of the sixteen recent graduates indicated that the placements had been very useful elements of their courses; indeed, for a quarter the placements had been the most valuable aspect. The most common explanation offered for this was that they offered real experience. As one put it, the placement had been

> *A genuine experience of responsibility, workload and teamwork in a community development context.* [I was] *treated like a member of staff* [with] *real pieces of work to do.*
>
> (Recent graduate from training)

Another valuable aspect of the placements was thought to be the opportunity to compare working in different settings and with different groups of people. These recent graduates felt that through the placements they had learned new approaches, developed new skills and generally increased their awareness of work.

However, a few people commented that the placements had been too short for them to achieve their objectives, and others were critical of what they saw as inadequate support and poor supervision. For some individuals, additional unhelpful factors had been being treated like a student, having no financial backup for the placement, a feeling of isolation and having to arrange the placement themselves (which half had been required to do).

8.2.3 Information from employers

Almost all the local authority main providers and half the community schools provided placements for community education students, but fewer than half in the other employer groups (voluntary organisations, FE colleges, other local authority departments and additional public sector employers).

It may be that in the search for placements training providers could cast their nets more widely. Those who did not usually provide placements were offered a list of possible reasons, and asked to indicate those which applied to them. Among all the groups, a very common reason for not providing placements was that these employers had never been asked. Another was that the organisation or department was too small; this was particularly true of the additional public sector employers and the FE colleges. In the latter group, another common reason was that no-one was willing to supervise. For about a third of the voluntary sector employers, having no trained supervisors was a reason for not offering placements.

Most of the employers had experienced difficulty in recruiting supervisors, but on the other hand, in most groups some respondents had found this very easy. In organisations and departments where people had taken on a supervisory role, the numbers were seldom above three. Although supervisors in most of the local authority main provider departments had received training, the proportions in the other employer groups were smaller, and in the voluntary sector group, under a quarter of the supervisors had received it. The training provider was usually a training institution.

The evidence suggests that providing student placements is, on the whole, a worthwhile experience for an employer: advantages were more frequently identified than disadvantages in most of the employer groups. Asked to name up to three of these advantages, employers made it plain that students were thought to bring in new ideas. They brought freshness, energy and up to date perspectives; they improved practice by challenging what was done and forcing supervisors to reflect on their own work. They raised staff awareness of their capabilities, while their presence stimulated academic discussions which helped organisations to link practice to current thinking. There were also very practical advantages to having an extra pair of hands about the place, which might mean a department or organisation could start a new project: in one case a student had helped to set up a partnership in an outreach area. Other advantages were that hosting placements helped departments and organisations maintain contact with training organisations, and students were sometimes recruitment material for the future.

On the other hand, plenty of respondents identified disadvantages: almost three quarters in the local authority main provider group and half among the voluntary sector respondents. The most common was that students placed demands on supervisors' time, not only because they needed support but also because supervisors felt the need to update themselves on theory. Supervision also distracted staff from their core work. All this increased their workloads and was exacerbated by the bureaucracy of marking and recording student progress. There were several comments on problems with poor students, which in one case had led to bad feeling. There were complaints that there had been no choice of student, that students needed too much support and that not all were 'team players'. Some respondents commented that students seemed to be poorly prepared for their placements, which was thought to increase the risk of problems. Other comments were that students knew more about theory and values than methods, that different tutors had different expectations and that support and support materials could be better.

8.3 Collaborative work

As noted above, some of the recent graduates from training had appreciated the opportunity afforded by their placements to see what it was like to work in different settings and with different groups of people. Indeed, one degree-level training provider remarked that placements, which were multi-disciplinary in settings, in themselves comprised one way of training for collaborative work.

Much of the data presented in the foregoing chapters points to a growing recognition of the need for those working in community education to collaborate with other professionals, whether through agreed partnerships or more informally through frequent contact with each other, to share relevant information. Practitioners and employers alike expected an increase in partnership and multi-disciplinary working, and consequently identified training needs in this area.

In relation to the need for multi-disciplinary training, key stakeholders' opinions, reported in Chapter 5, also suggest that successful collaborative work, particularly across professional boundaries, will be difficult to achieve. While changes in training might go a long way to improve the situation, several barriers to its success which may be beyond the potential of training to break down were identified: the rigidity of departmental structures claimed to exist within some local authorities was offered as an example. Nevertheless, training providers at all levels claimed to be committed to collaborative, multi-disciplinary training and believed it to be very necessary and important. Community education workers were being used in different ways as the work became increasingly diverse and collaborative working increasingly common: as one training provider commented, most councils now went in for 'joined up working' so that teaching, social work and health, for example, were working together, and there were opportunities for co-operation with other areas such as housing. Some local authorities were thought to be adopting collaborative training methods such as shadowing.

Training providers were asked if they trained students for collaborative work, what they thought the barriers to such training were and how they might be overcome. Their views on these questions are summarised below.

8.3.1 Training for collaboration at institution-based degree level

Training providers identified four basic ways in which such training was currently being given, though one recognised that more could be done in this regard. One means of providing it was simply the placement, as placements were multi-disciplinary in themselves. Full comment has been made about these above, and will not be repeated here. More information about the other three is given below.

Input from outside speakers

All but one of the degree-level training providers stated that people from outside their own institutions' community education departments gave an input to community education training courses. These variously included staff from other departments within the institution, practitioners from the community education field and other areas such as health work, social work and local authority work generally. The latter included chief officers and social strategy planners able to give insight into interprofessional working with local authorities, and inter-agency working between local councils and voluntary sector agencies. In one institution the latter type of input was considerable, being given for four hours over twelve weeks in the second year, and covering topics such as early intervention, community schools, alternative to education, looked-after children and anti-poverty/ social inclusion strategies. Students were required to consider key areas of interprofessional practice and focus on interprofessional working throughout the course.

Joint/shared courses

Again, all but one of these training providers ran courses which students training for different professions took in common. At one institution, four faculty-wide modules were taught to all undergraduate students jointly. Primary and secondary teachers, social workers, speech and language therapists and community education workers were all involved. In addition, the institution offered shared modules developed by staff across different departments and taught to community education students, primary and secondary school teachers, social workers and students of outdoor education. All these modules were taught in each academic session at undergraduate level across the three years of the ordinary degree; the institution saw the arrangements as a considerable commitment to multi-disciplinary training.

Another institution's undergraduate degree required community education students to follow a generic education course in first year along with all the teachers in training, as well as with students in leisure studies and some from outside the faculty such as those taking a psychology degree.

Plans for a similar shared year were under way in a different institution, which ran a joint induction programme for all teacher education, social work and community education students, as well as joint first year classes for social work and community education students in social policy (to be extended to include teacher education students). In second year all three student groups came together for classes in collaborative practice.

Course options

One of the training providers drew attention to the institution's course options in partnership working, health issues, inclusive education and fund-raising, as well as to student involvement in school initiative-related projects. The university tried to foster the skills needed for community capacity building which would cut across professional boundaries, rather than those required for direct teaching, although the latter were still important.

8.3.2 Training for collaboration at work-based degree level

One of the work-based training providers stressed that because the training was delivered through a multi-disciplinary partnership with representatives from health work, a local authority, Scottish Enterprise and the police, a multi-disciplinary emphasis was built in. Trainees worked in all these settings, and in coming together it was inevitable that they should learn from each other. The training provider hoped that in the future the degree would be tailored to the needs of specific working areas and be offered, for example, as the Bachelor of Community Development (Social Economy) or the Bachelor of Community Development (Housing) and so on. Such degrees would be endorsed by the relevant professional bodies as well as CeVe – by the Institute of Housing, for example.

8.3.3 Training for collaboration at HNC level

There was little evidence of training of this kind in the further and higher education colleges, although students from different courses sometimes came together for classes and some colleges brought in outside speakers.

8.3.4 What is needed to improve training for collaboration?

In spite of ongoing plans for change, some of which are indicated above, training providers were in agreement that the lack of funding for collaborative, multi-disciplinary training was a major barrier to improving what was currently on offer. At one level the dearth of money meant there were no incentives for staff to change and re-write courses, which was a major task. One institution pointed out that getting staff from other faculties to give an input could be problematic if the community education department was unable to pay for that input.

Some institutions saw potential difficulty in the different perspectives taken by various professions to similar issues, which might make it inappropriate for them to share courses.

Training providers offering both degrees and HNCs felt there was a need to change attitudes, both within their own institutions and within the other professions which needed to work with community education. People were reluctant to weaken their professional bases, and needed to be sure of benefits before putting effort into making changes. People had to be committed. Somewhat wryly, the point was made that if institutions were forced to make training for collaborative work a priority (through greater emphasis in the CeVe guidelines, for example), then change was more likely to come about. Some people pointed out that time would have to be allowed for thinking and planning, building up links and putting changes in place.

Other difficulties including practical problems such as timetabling and improved channels of communication within institutions, so that expectations of change were known well in advance by those who would have to carry them out.

8.4 Use of APEL and APL

We found little evidence that either was much used except in the sense that requirements for academic qualifications were dropped for students with experience. One training provider of HNC level training told us that two students had been able to persuade a university to accept HNC graduates straight into the second year, but this does not seem to have been the norm.

A different HNC provider commented ruefully that although both APL and APEL seemed like a good idea and the department had drawn up careful criteria against which students were asked to assess the value of their previous experience or qualifications, it was so much effort for them to gather the evidence together that in the end students found it easier to do the course. Those who were successful gained little except extra free time by virtue of missing a module. They could substitute a different one if they wanted.

8.5 Equality of access to training

We were unable to gather enough evidence to comment in detail on this. In spite of inviting representatives of racial equality and ethnic minority groups to expert group meetings, few of the invitations were taken up. A key stakeholder representing a corporate equality unit put a particular 'minorities' slant on several of his comments, emphasising, for example, that it was not enough simply to understand the perspectives of others; those perspectives had to be recognised as having real value. He also stressed that although community education workers claimed to have life experience, this experience was predominantly white, a comment which suggests a need to attract greater numbers of people from ethnic minority populations into community education. However, because of the absence of national statistics relating to the numbers and types of people entering and leaving training we do not know how many community education practitioners of non-white origin there are.

8.6 Summary and comment

8.6.1 Summary

Placements

CeVe guidelines highlight the crucially important nature of fieldwork placements in HNC and degree level training for community education. However, training providers, almost all at degree provision level, identified many difficulties in relation to them. These related to placement availability, quality, supervision and cost.

Recent graduates tended to have valued their placements highly because they had been a genuine experience of work, but there were criticisms of the support and supervision they received. From the employers' perspective, most local authority departments provided placements, but employers in the other groups seemed less likely to host them. A main reason for this was that many of these employers had never been approached with a request to provide placement, but others included the organisation or department's being too small and having no trained supervisors.

Employers identified more advantages than disadvantages to hosting placements. Advantages were that students brought new thinking, improved practice through challenging it, raised staff awareness of their capabilities and stimulated interesting academic discussions. It was useful to have an extra person around, and also to have an open channel of communication with training providers. By contrast, disadvantages included demands on supervisors' time and when students were not good, the risk of ill-feeling within an organisation. Some employers complained of having had no choice of students, and others that students had seemed poorly prepared for their placements, knowing more about theory than method. There were comments that different tutors had different expectations and that support and support materials could be improved.

Collaborative work

Although training providers at institution-based degree level claimed to train students in collaborative working in four main ways, one provider thought his institution could do more in this regard. The four ways were through placements, which were a collaborative activity, input from outside speakers, joint/shared courses and options related to collaborative multi-disciplinary work. At the level of work-based provision the view was taken that when they came together students brought a multi-disciplinary input with them from the variety of settings in which they worked. At HNC level there was little training for collaborative work.

Informants generally thought that funding was needed to improve training for collaboration – it would give staff an incentive to write and re-write courses and would pay for extra-departmental speakers whether from within the institution or outside it. The need for less professional defensiveness was commented on, and it was pointed out that commitment from those who had to make collaboration work would demand involvement from all concerned in it. There was a comment that if CeVe gave greater priority to collaborative working in the guidelines, then it would have to be built in to courses.

APEL/ APL

There was little evidence that either of these was much used except in the sense that academic qualification requirements for mature student entry were lowered or dispensed with altogether. The view was expressed that while the idea of APEL and APL was attractive, making it work was very difficult.

Equality of access to training

The Review was unable to gather enough evidence about this issue to make detailed comment, although there was some indication that more black community education workers were thought needed.

8.6.2 Comment

Given the centrally important role placed on fieldwork placements (*cf* Kolb, 1984; Lave and Wenger, 1991; Wilson and Pirrie, 1999 – all of whom report on experimental and situational learning) and the reliance training providers had on them for skills development, there are hugely important implications for training in the very real problems that seem to surround this aspect of course provision. The fact that employers outwith the local authorities seem an under-used resource in this suggests that training providers could look further afield for the quality they need, but for this they need information and, perhaps, the ability to make payment to the host institutions; the question of funding for community education is again raised.

The data on how students are trained for collaborative working are inconclusive, partly because some of the ideas in use are relatively new in relatively new courses that need time to bed down. This is an area which would repay further work and perhaps a formal evaluation of its progress.

With respect to APEL/APL, we are not sure how far it was hoped that accreditation would be given. Perhaps the lowering/ removal of formal entrance requirements at degree level is all that was expected. There is evidence from other research (Malcolm and Wilson, 2000) that it is difficult to find a convenient and robust strategy for putting either APEL or APL into place.

Without access to a clear profile of students entering and leaving community education professional training, it is difficult to know where access to training is difficult or what level of action is needed to redress the balance.

9: Discussion and Options

9.1 Introduction

The evidence presented in this Review covers a great deal of ground, and carries implications for training at both minor and major levels. The brief comments at the end of each chapter have flagged some of these; this chapter revisits those the team considers particularly important and which seem to have the most far-reaching implications. The chapter ends by presenting three possible ways forward for training, suggesting changes which range from the relatively modest to the considerably radical.

We would like to stress, however, that all the Scottish-based degree level training providers claimed to have made course changes since 1998, and point out that students who entered three year training courses in that year or later will still be in training. How far the non-training provider informants to this Review were able to take account of recent developments is uncertain; to some extent their views will take a historical perspective. The discussion presented in this chapter is based solely on evidence gathered in the course of the Review.

9.2 The need for a national student tracking system

The team was unable to find reliable statistical information about student entry to community education training. Without such basic information, decision makers cannot know how many professionally trained practitioners there are, where they are working, what experience they have, or where they are needed, yet information of this kind is necessary if supply and demand are to be matched and equality of access to the profession is to be checked and ensured.

Recommendation 1: We recommend that thought be given at strategic level to decide exactly what information is wanted, how it should be collected and how often, who should collect it and how it is going to be resourced.

9.3 Practical skills development

Perhaps the most important issue emerging from the current Review is that while community education workers need practical skills, many who have recently qualified are not thought able to apply them fully. Indeed, there is evidence that student teachers might agree that they were in the same situation. A recent study of ICT training (Simpson *et al*, 1998) suggests that despite having positive attitudes to ICT and its value, student teachers lack confidence in their own abilities to use it: about half those in the study believed themselves less skilled in this area than the pupils they would teach.

One of the problems with regard to making the transition from learning a skill to having acquired it is that the acquisition process is developmental. It comes to fruition over time and with experience. Ryle (1962) points out that learning *how* is not like learning *that*, or like acquiring information. He writes,

> It makes sense to ask at what moment someone became apprised of a truth, but not to ask at what moment someone acquired a skill ... Training is the art of setting tasks which the pupils have not yet accomplished but are not any longer quite incapable of accomplishing.
>
> (Ryle, 1962)

Some comfort may be had in the knowledge that community education is not alone in its struggle with this issue. The question of how to help practitioners reach high levels of practical skill is common to many professions and many vocational occupations: trainee lawyers, for example, hone their skills in mock courtrooms, and engineers learning the techniques of extracting gas from the North Sea bed make use of simulated drilling platforms. Simulations may be useful options for those training in community education, provided that their quality can be ensured. However, if acquiring mastery of a skill is a process that develops over time and with experience, it seems unlikely that students, especially those who are relatively inexperienced and less mature, will leave initial qualifying training equipped to implement the skills they have started to acquire. Some onus therefore must lie with both employers and the graduates themselves to take the skills they have begun to acquire further.

Recommendation 2: We suggest that together training providers and employers give consideration to devising ways of embedding learning from experience more deeply into the development of community education professionals.

9.4 Placement problems

Currently fieldwork through placement is the main way in which training attempts to develop practical skills. Unfortunately, as the evidence presented in this report clearly shows, placements present the training institutions with considerable difficulties. It is hard for training providers to find enough placements to ensure quality and choice; given the current constraints of funding, they cannot widen the pool of availability by offering payment or greater payment; and being unable to offer financial incentives to potential placement hosts they are on shaky ground if they wish to make sure employers comply with requirements for assessment and standards of supervision. The current study was unable to do more than gather data on the broadest of levels, and without in-depth information can do no more than state that among our informants these difficulties were widely agreed to exist. But the issues surrounding placements are complex, as shown in a recent study of placements in teacher education (Deloitte and Touche, 1999), and given the current emphasis on placement as a means of developing practical skills, the notion warrants further investigation.

Recommendation 3: We believe that a separate study evaluating placements in community education training is needed, which among other issues would investigate their length and timing, their efficiency in relation to their aims and their efficiency in relation to their cost.

9.5 Differing voluntary and local authority sector needs

The evidence presented in this report reveals grounds to support the notion that although there are areas of similarity, there are also differences in community education work in the voluntary and local authority sectors. These differences seem to reside particularly in the extent to which specific knowledge and skills are needed. If training needs within the voluntary sector are to be explored thoroughly, however, we believe that a study focusing on voluntary organisations alone will be required. In spite of strong and not unsuccessful attempts to gather information from the voluntary sector, the team feels that in the current work representation from local authorities has been the stronger. In our view, any study of relatively modest means which endeavours to encompass both local authorities and voluntary organisations will encounter the same problem, because it is far easier to elicit responses from a high proportion of those working in the limited number of local authorities than it is from similar proportions of people working in the thousands of voluntary organisations.

It is in relation to the voluntary sector particularly that it may be relevant to ask how far the three strands of community education work, brought together in Scotland so long ago by the Alexander report, have actually coalesced. The Osler report tried to bring cohesion to community education by naming it 'community learning' and stating its purpose in terms of the three themes promoting personal development, community capacity building and investing in community learning. However, most voluntary organisations have retained highly specific foci of interest which are closely related to the old groupings of youth work, adult work and community work. Recent Government initiatives emphasising youth work and literacy have reinforced the impression that the three divisions are very much a reality for those working in the field. How far should HNC and degree providers of community education training try to take account of them? And to what degree of specificity is it feasible to take training at these levels?

Clearly some degree of specialism is already built into degree courses: the Department of Adult and Continuing Education at Glasgow University has an adult education focus, for example, and Edinburgh University offers options at Honours level which enable students to pursue interests in various areas. How much further the training providers can practicably go down these routes is not clear. Course content is already thought to be over-heavy, which suggests that if further specialism is needed at this level of training something must be cut. One possibility is that collectively the training institutions could decide that each should specialise, making sure that between them all major areas of work were covered. Another is that they accept that degree-level training is broad and generic, without being overly concerned to offer specialisms.

Recommendation 4: We recommend that a study of that part of the voluntary sector with a community education or community learning interest be undertaken which will clarify the extent to which those working within it (paid and unpaid) need and want both community education qualifying and other training. It would also seek to clarify the relative values of broad generic and work-specific training within this sector.

9.6 The importance of in-service training for practitioners

The immense breadth of skills and knowledge required for community education work, taken together with many of the points made about practical skills earlier in this chapter, direct attention overwhelmingly to the essential nature of regular in-service training, delivered through free-standing modules. The range of specialist knowledge required, particularly but not exclusively in the voluntary sector, coupled with the speed with which requirements in the workplace change, make it impossible for training institutions to keep abreast of need. However hard they work to revise courses, the necessary time lag between the beginning and end of a three-year training period will undermine their effort.

There are other reasons for emphasising the importance of in-service training for community education. One is that placements alone are unlikely to provide enough experience for trainees to reach high skills levels. Another is that, as figures noted in Chapter 2 suggest, the number of volunteer workers in community education across the board is extremely high: in the voluntary sector they far outnumber paid workers. Many of these have no professional community education qualifications, and although they may have received training for the work there is no way to know how many have received it or what skills have been fostered. Continued support for these staff through reliable in-service training of high quality is vital.

Recommendation 5: We believe that all community education staff should have access to continuing professional development (CPD), and that consideration should be given to devising an entitlement for all staff.

In our view it is also crucially important to ensure that newly qualified community education staff are supported by a guaranteed programme of continued professional development that would enable them to develop their interests and skills, match those interests and skills with the work they are undertaking, and maintain flexibility in their careers – an important consideration when so much current work is short term in nature. A probationary year could provide a useful vehicle for ensuring that newly trained professional staff were guaranteed time for study. Exceptions from probation could be made for mature staff with years of experience, provided that the value of those years of experience could be recognised according to agreed criteria. However, we believe that a commitment to a set number of days of continuing professional development would be beneficial for all practitioners throughout their careers. This would require the co-operation of employers and practitioners, who would need to enter into formal agreements, and clearly there would be major implications for funding. Nevertheless, the issue is of great importance.

Recommendation 6: All newly qualified community education staff should be supported by an induction programme, and consideration should be given to instituting a probationary period for these staff.

9.7 Continued professional development for training providers

The evidence of this Review suggests that staff in the training institutions should now have serious and ongoing connections with employers and practitioners in the field through a variety of means. It may be that staff in some institutions are more active in this regard than in others, but the evidence suggests that connections of this kind are extremely valuable in keeping staff up to date with developments in a fast-changing world and helping them maintain their direct interest.

To ensure that these connections are maintained and built upon, it could be helpful to ensure that all staff involved in delivering community education training whether at HNC or degree level should commit themselves to continued professional development through time spent in the field, perhaps through regular secondment. Advantages would be two way: not only would trainers be confident of freshness and relevance in their work with students, but the data suggest that employers value the opportunity of academic contact to renew their own thinking.

Recommendation 7: All training providers should be asked to design a CPD programme, including secondments back to practice, for the purposes of their own training.

9.8 Promoting collaborative working

Greater two-way flexibility of movement between the field and those providing HNC and degree level training might give the further advantage of breaking down some of the professional barriers thought to stand in the way of successful multi-disciplinary working. In addition, flexibility of this kind could serve as a useful model of multi-disciplinary work for students in training.

This Review has made the point that collaborative work is thought to be difficult. Not surprisingly, this view is shared by people in other professions; but there are no ready-made models which demonstrate how it can be fostered. The providers of community education training are attempting to prepare students for it by bringing in outside speakers and mounting shared courses, but there is evidence that such strategies have limited success. Clark (1993) suggests that shared understanding is not reached simply by putting people together in groups; McMichael and Gilloran (1984) showed that unless students exposed to shared teaching have opportunities for truly joint teamwork, a degree of inter-student hostility can result. Pirrie *et al* (1998) report a similar finding: instead of developing enthusiasm for multi-disciplinary working, trainee nurses sharing lectures with medical students during a common first year course sat in segregated groups and expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of opportunity to consolidate their own sense of professional identity. The literature does, however, echo the findings of the current Review in pointing to the importance of commitment on the part of those who have to make collaboration work, trust from all sides, a belief that something will be gained from collaboration and realistic levels of support.

Recommendation 8: Training providers should be asked to develop opportunities for genuine multi-professional training at pre-qualifying and qualifying stage with other professions such as social work, teaching, health and housing.

9.9 Accreditation of prior experience and learning

We have noted elsewhere in this report that institution-based providers of degree-level community education training are lowering the demands for academic requirements being made on people wishing to enter training, particularly those who are more mature in years and experience. In some cases academic requirements still seem somewhat high, however, and if the arguments put forward by some stakeholders that people without academic backgrounds can be well equipped for work in community education are upheld more generally, it might be worthwhile for training providers to consider whether further adjustments could be made to take account of this.

In many cases people without academic backgrounds but with years of accrued experience will be asking themselves if they want to aim at a professional qualification. Qualifications broaden career pathways; they increase pay. They are therefore important. However, getting locked into traditional routes through training may not be appropriate for people who can demonstrate practical skills through long experience. In this respect the various work-based and in-service options for training must be very welcome. We wonder, however, whether there is more scope for looking at in-service modules and considering the possibility of agreeing formal equivalences between in-service module packages and modules covered through more traditional study. Thus a student might, for example, bring a training provider five years' of experience plus accreditation in a given number of in-service modules, and in return be given credit for two of the three years of study towards a degree. The missing study could be made up either through the student's moving to full or part time institution-based study, or by training provider staff travelling to bring training to the workplace, along lines currently provided by one institution. Arrangements of these kinds could have considerable advantages for students between work periods who want to make good use of their time, and for those on work-based training courses, who might benefit from access to a wider range of reflective academic input than at present.

The history of success in APL and APEL is not encouraging and it is unlikely to be an easy task to make arrangements, especially the preparation of portfolios of evidence, work, but nevertheless some students, particularly those without traditionally academic backgrounds, would have much to gain by them.

Recommendation 9: Training providers should be asked to develop various schemes for accrediting previous learning and experience and integrate these into a network of qualifications to provide professional community education status.

9.10 Possible training options

Three broad models are suggested below. Before we set them out, however, we would like to make four recommendations that would apply whatever option or combination of options was adopted.

Recommendation 10: First, it would be helpful for CeVe to build into its guidelines for endorsement the requirement that training institutions must collect information on an annual basis about students entering and leaving courses, and other information as necessary.

Recommendation 11: Second, CeVe endorsements need to apply standardised, systematic and very clear criteria and methods to all courses.

Recommendation 12: Third, the availability of a clear overview of routes into training and what each entailed would be helpful. Unless only one model of training is adopted, there will be several routes into and several training models for community education qualifying training, to suit the different stages and experience of prospective trainees. CLS could take responsibility for making such an overview publicly available.

Recommendation 13: Last, whatever models are adopted for qualifying training, graduates from that training should be required to commit themselves to continuing professional development throughout their working lives.

9.10.1 Option 1: Amendments to the status quo

Several arguments may be advanced for pursuing this option. One is that some stakeholders considered current training provision to be doing a reasonable job. Another is that training providers have only recently introduced new courses which are as yet untested and need time to 'bed down'; before imposing the need for further change on the institutions there could be merit in giving these courses a chance to prove themselves. In respect of this option, then, the steps suggested below seek to strengthen and build on what already exists while improving matters in the more problematic areas.

Option 1 is to retain current structures (HNC, institution-based degree level provision, work based degree level provision including distance learning), but with the provisos that:-

- Training providers scrutinise their course content to ensure it gives real and clear prominence to social inclusion, lifelong learning and active citizenship, with particular emphasis on the first
- Training providers scrutinise courses with the aim of reducing theory to the minimum needed and giving more time to skills development and both structured and peer group discussion
- Training providers continue to build on their use of key community members, especially employer representatives, on course committees and panels, and be prepared to seek fresh representation when necessary (eg if employers find it difficult to attend regularly or feel they have contributed as much as they can)

- Training providers consider greater use of alternatives/adjuncts to placements, eg simulations, and seek to broaden the range of placement opportunities through approaching employers who have not been main placement providers up to now, including other local authority departments and a wider range of voluntary sector organisations with an appropriate knowledge base
- Training providers build on external contacts to make greater use of speakers from as many aspects of the field as possible, particularly the voluntary sector. Quality of input should be evaluated on a systematic basis
- CeVe supports the above provisos by using its power as an endorsing body to require that they happen, eg by building in the proviso that community education lecturers in training institutions should return to the field regularly (eg for three months every third year), and by prioritising social inclusion as a focus for community education qualifying training in its guidelines
- Funding is made available to support training providers in any course changes needed.

9.10.2 Option 2: Structural changes to degrees

The importance of experiential learning in community education pre-qualifying and qualifying training cannot be over-emphasised. A more radical option than that outlined above would be to adopt what used to be known as a 'sandwich' model, where the second year is the sandwich filling. During this year students would return to their training bases for (say) a day each week to exchange ideas and link their work activity to what is learned through other coursework. Placements in the first and third years would be retained.

All the provisos given above would apply to this model.

9.10.3 Option 3: Radical changes

A more radical move still would be to encourage the availability of work-based training, about which several data providers from all groups were enthusiastic, to the extent that it becomes the main route to a professional qualification for community education. Employers would need to maintain close links with training providers, who would provide regular, structured and accredited opportunities for exploring theory and reflecting on practice. With the agreement of employers, it might be possible to consider student exchanges between work bases as a way of providing greater breadth of experience. If successful, the model could be adapted to provide a basis for higher level training (students could undertake research using their workplaces, for example) and it could also be used to take people with qualifications in other professions to a professional qualification in community education.

There are funding implications in all these models, but particularly the last. We do not know how responsive employers would be, but their support and co-operation would clearly be essential.

It is our view that the changes proposed in Option 1 are the absolute minimum required to update community education training, but that these changes may not be sufficient for it to cope with the implications following on from the Osler report. Options 2 and 3, therefore, should be given serious consideration.

None of the models outlined in the options, however, needs to be considered as exclusive, and an argument can be advanced for offering alternatives. It was suggested in Chapter 4 that many kinds of people come to community education from many different backgrounds, wanting to acquire a huge range of skills to be applied in a wide range of contexts. If this is the case, it seems unlikely that any one model of qualifying training will meet all needs, and one course would be to ensure that all three of the models outlined above were on offer, so that potential students could choose between them according to their own circumstances. In that scenario, however, it would be of critical importance to ensure that the quality of each route through training was consistent and that outputs were clearly comparable. If they were not, the strengths (and, by implication, the shortcomings) of outputs from different models would have to be clearly stated in the awards obtained.

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Appendix 1: List of responding local authorities an departments

Local Authority	Departments Responding
Aberdeen City	Arts and Recreation Education
Aberdeenshire	Education and Recreation
Angus	Recreation Services Education - Community Education
Argyll and Bute	Economic Development, Tourism and Leisure Education Social work
Clackmannanshire	Education Chief Executive's Community Education and Training
Dumfries and Galloway	Education
Dundee City	Education Unknown Social Work Dept Neighbourhood Resources and Development
East Ayrshire	Education and social Services Community Education Services
East Lothian	Education and Community Services
East Renfrewshire	Unknown
Edinburgh City	Education
Falkirk	Community Services
Fife	Community Services Social work
Glasgow City	Education Education Services (Community Education Services)
Highland	Cultural and Leisure Services Community Education
Inverclyde	Leisure and Community Support Services
Midlothian	Education Economic Development Unit
North Ayrshire	Educational Services
North Lanarkshire	Community Services, Libraries and Information Section Community Services, Arts and Venues Section Community Services
Perth and Kinross	Education and Children's Services
Renfrewshire	Education and Leisure
Scottish Borders	Housing Education
Shetland Islands	Community Services
South Ayrshire	Educational Services
South Lanarkshire	Social work Education School Development Education Department Education
Stirling	Community Services
West Dunbartonshire	Education and Cultural Services
West Lothian	Education

Appendix 2: List of responding organisations other than local authority main provider

CLS
Banff and Buchan College of Further Education
WEA
YMCA Scottish National Council
Glasgow Careers Service
Balerno Community High School
Drummond Community High School
Leith Academy Community High School
Wester Hailes Education Centre
Burnfoot Community School
Edinburgh and Lothians Racial Equality Council
Tayside Racial Equality Council
Angus College
Cardonald College
Dumfries and Galloway College
Dundee College
Edinburgh's Telford College
Elmwood College
Falkirk College of Further and Higher Education
Fife College of Further and Higher Education
Glenrothes College
James Watt College of Further and Higher Education
John Wheatley College
Kilmarnock College
Langside College
Lews Castle College
Perth College
Reid Kerr College
West Lothian College
Barnardo's
Community Service Volunteers
Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Outward Bound Scotland
PHAB Scotland
Scottish Centres
Scottish Community Drama Association
Scottish Conservation Projects
Scottish Council on Alcoholism
Scottish Youth Theatre
Scout Association
Shelter
Volunteer Development Scotland
Youth Clubs Scotland

YWCA
Youthlink
Employers in Voluntary Housing
Friends of the Earth
Lead Scotland
Arbroath Academy (NCS)
Kirn Primary School (NCS)
Prestonpans Primary School (NCS)
Grangemouth High School (NCS)
Merkinch Primary School (NCS)
Irvine Royal Academy (NCS)
St Davids Primary School (NCS)
Dundee Healthy Alliance
6VT Edinburgh City Youth Cafe
Church of Scotland - Drugs
Health Promotion
IDEAS
Key Housing
South Ayrshire Dementia Support Association
Bethany Christian Trust
Broxburn Family Centre
Disability Shetland
Craigmillar Health Project
Edinburgh Women's Aid
Edinburgh Women's Training Centre (EWTC)
Drug and Alcohol Project (West Lothian)
Family Advice Information resource
Respite Fife
Glasgow Council on Alcohol
Home-Start Garioch
Iona Community Ltd
Granton Information Centre
Ladywell Friendly Bank
Ocean Youth Trust of Scotland

Appendix 3: Expert Group Method

A major and early step in the Review involved drawing up a functional map of the main tasks undertaken by community education workers in as wide a variety as possible of contexts. It was hoped that the map would give a basis from which the Review could explore ways in which training might need to change if it was to meet the challenges implied in 'Communities: Change Through Learning' (Scottish Office, 1998a).

To draw up this map, in the late summer of 2000 three discussion groups of community education experts (ie people whose daily work was active engagement in community education in a number of ways) were set up. One group was held in Glasgow, a second in Edinburgh and the third in Dundee. It was the team's aim to have a maximum of 16 participants at each group; in the event participant numbers ranged from 10 at the smallest to 15 at the largest.

Expert group composition was based on a random stratified sample to give as wide a mix as possible of:

- people from the north, south, east and west of Scotland
- people working in urban areas
- people working in rural areas
- people working in local authorities
- people working in the voluntary sector
- community educators
- community education workers
- people working at management level
- people working at non-management level
- people doing different types of community education work
- training providers
- elected council members

Within those criteria, invitations were sent directly to people selected at random from the CLS Directory.

It was impossible directly to involve everyone who might have been interested in attending the groups. Because of this, once the expert groups had met, the outcomes from discussion were put on the web site and responses invited in a structured way. A small number of responses to this were received.

With the six CeVe competences as their starting point, participants at all three expert groups were asked to consider what these main tasks would be. Coming to the discussions from different levels of work, many participants undertook day to day basic tasks as part of their own remits. On a personal level others, more senior, had largely left basic work behind but brought the perspective of

people with the job of managing others and requiring work from them. Working first in pairs then joining others to form increasingly larger sets, each expert group reduced its own task lists to the minimum. The research team took the job of eliminating duplicates further in bringing together the tasks identified by all three groups. It is important to note that the objective of the three discussions was to identify those tasks which everyone agreed were necessary; the discussion group method sought consensus. For this reason, although in specific settings community education workers may well have engaged in other tasks, these specific tasks would not have appeared on the final lists.

The resulting task lists were validated by both the original groups and by a further group of 100 community education workers. Validations were also obtained from three people working in other fields: health promotion, housing and a regeneration partnership.

We would like to add a comment on the use of the CeVe competences as a starter framework for the expert group discussions. Initially, the team had scanned material of many kinds which described community education-related work in an attempt to find a fresh starting point for the debate. Driving this was a belief that the CeVe headings might limit participants' thinking. However, it became increasingly clear that the breadth of the work made this approach unfeasible. The decision was therefore taken to base discussions on the six existing CeVe competences. Although they might constrain thinking, we felt they had the two advantages that participants' comfort with them would help get discussions started, and that as people had been working to them since 1995 they would be a reasonable reflection of work as it was. A third advantage was that they would have greater credibility than starting points identified by a team of people who were not themselves experts in community education. This decision was vindicated when participants at the expert groups agreed the CeVe headings gave a useful framework.

Appendix 4

FE College 1: HNC 'Working with Communities'

Core Units:	
Principles and Practice of Working in Community-based Settings	2 credits/80 hours
Workplace Practice Experience in a Community-based Setting	2 credits
Social Science Approaches to Working with People in Community-based Settings	2 credits
Managing Resources in a Community-based Setting	1 credit/ 40 hours
Developing Learning Opportunities in a Community-based Setting	1 credit
Preparing to Work with Local Communities	1 credit
Interpersonal and Group Skills	1 credit
Optional units (one to be chosen)	
Working with Young People in the Community	2 credits
Working with Adult Learners in the Community	2 credits
Community Work and Community Development	2 credits
Student will gain	12 credits total (480 hours)

40 hours = 1 credit
80 hours = 2 credits

Distance Learning Provider: BA (Hons) Informal and Community Education
'Subject' and 'Practice' Courses

The courses set out below form the building blocks of four programmes: the Cert HE, the Dip HE, the BA and the BA Hons as follows:

6 level 1 courses including double practice courses Cert HE	6 level 2 courses including double practice courses Dip HE	4 level 3 courses including double practice courses BA 6 level 3 courses including double practice courses BA Hons

Level 1 Subject Courses — 120 points to be gained at each level. Includes a double practice course 200 hours approx. required for each subject course; 600 hours for each practice course

1. Working with Theory
- Becoming a student 1
- Becoming a student 2
- Thinking
- Recording and reflecting on practice
- Undertaking small research projects

2. Human Relations — 200 hours
- Human development: physical and cognitive development
- Human development: social development and developmental stages
- The self and social relationships
- Values
- Education and young people's identity and relationships

3. Informal Education and Working with Individuals — 200 hours
- The nature of informal education
- Informal education with young people
- Approaching work with individuals
- Roles, boundaries and interventions
- Evaluation

4. Society and Societal Organisation — 200 hours
- Introducing the social: groups and committees
- Introducing the social: institutions and culture
- Ideologies, values and politics
- Religion in Society
- Key themes in economics and social policy

Level 2 'subject' courses' — 120 points

1. Working with Groups — 200 hours
- The nature of groups
- Working with groups
- Intervention in groups
- Fostering learning opportunities in formal groups
- Working with groups: issues and limitations

2. Education Studies — 200 hours
- Educational thinkers
- Curriculum and conversation
- Informal education, power and 'race'
- Informal education, gender, sexuality and dis/ability
- Basic education

3. Organisational and policy development — 200 hours
- Systems in organisations
- People in organisations
- Equal opportunities and the organisational content
- Finance and planning in organisations
- Informal education practice and the law

4. Community Studies — 200 hours
- Community
- Community profiling
- Models of intervention
- Working with local groups
- Critiques and possibilities

Level 3 'subject' courses — 80 points (BA)
1. Adult and Community Education — 120 points (BA Hons)
- Approaching adult learning — 200 hours
- Exploring adult education
- Educating in the community
- Community education: the school
- Adult and community education: critiques and possibilities

2. Individual Studies — 200 hours
- Approaching an individual study
- On methodology
- Building theory and writing up

3. Special Studies (specifically geared to teachers on DiPSE programmes) — 200 hours
- Approaching a practice study
- On methodology
- Building theory and writing up

4. Professional Studies **OPTION** — 200 hours
- Values and ethics 1
- Values and ethics 2
- Professionalisation
- The nature of community
- Working in the community

5. Spirituality and Practice **OPTION** — 200 hours
- Values and ethics 1
- Values and ethics 2
- Approaching spirituality
- Traditions of practice
- Spirituality and practice - possible pathways

6. Advice and Guidance **OPTION** — 200 hours
- Values and ethics 1
- Values and ethics 2
- Approaching advice and guidance
- Traditions of practice
- Framing advice and guidance - organisational and policy considerations

7. Literacy Practices and Education	200 hours
Definitions of literacy	
Literacies and learning	
Contexts	
Models of practice	
Literacy and development	
8. Working with Youth Groups and Community Groups	200 hours
Informal education, youth work and community work	
Youth and community work: personal troubles and public issues	
Working with groups	
Intervention in groups	
Fostering learning opportunities in formal groups	
'Practice' Courses	600 hours
Reflection on Professional Practice	
Engaging with practice	
Self assessment	
Reflection on Professional Practice	600 hours
Reflection in and on action	
Reflection on Professional Practice	600 hours
The professional base	
Supervising professionals	

University 1: Bachelor of Community Education Community Development

Year 1
Term 1
Module 1: The Community Education Function

Covers:
- basic values and principles of community development, including human rights and strategies for anti discriminatory practice
- global context of development and mainstream social theories, including detailed consideration of current UK social policy
- development of community activity in the UK, Freire and practice in the USA

Term 2
Module 2: Engagement with the Community

Covers:
- basic skills of engaging with the community
- basics of group work practice and models of community work

Term 3:
Placement module 1

Year 2
Term 1
Module 3: Development of Learning Opportunities

Covers:
- learning and its contribution to communities
- class/ poverty barriers to learning
- diverse and creative approaches

Module 4: Empowerment of Communities

Covers:
- meanings of empowerment, examination of social theories and modernism/post modernism debate
- contribution of sustainability to practice
- a flexible model of community development

Term 3:
Placement module 2

Year 3
Term 1
Module 5: Organisation and Management of Community Resources

Covers
- the operation of a financial management system
- the design of a financial management system for small organisations
- the application of relevant legislation
- the design and operation of a control system for physical resources
- the design and operation of a staff management structure

Term 2
Module 6: Evaluation of Community Development

Covers:
- introduction to various research methods

exploration of ways in which evaluation can be used to enhance practice

Term 3
Placement module 3

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